

# IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 8, NO. 19

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electoral  
strike force.**





By John B. Judis

## WASHINGTON

More is at stake in this year's Democratic presidential election than who will be the candidate in November. Two views of how the party should choose its nominee are again vying for supremacy. Which view triumphs will decidedly influence what kind of candidates the Democrats will nominate in the future.

The first view—represented by the post-1968 reform faction in the party—is that candidates should be chosen by popular vote in the primaries and they should be arranged in such a way as to allow initially lesser-known candidates to compete with those who have greater initial name recognition and financial and organizational support. The other view—represented by the AFL-CIO leadership and top staff, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM), former Vice-President Walter Mondale and a host of self-appointed power brokers—is that party officials, elected Democrats and the heads of major constituent organizations should be accorded a special, if not predominant, role in choosing the Democratic nominee.

Since Jimmy Carter's landslide defeat in 1980, the anti-reform faction has been able to modify the nominating process with a view toward favoring better-known Washington-backed candidates and increasing the power non-elected delegates wield at the nominating convention. Had the Democratic race this year gone according to script, with Mondale winning a quick victory and Jesse Jackson organizing a get-out-the-vote drive in the South, few might have questioned the new party rules. But the surprising success of both Jackson and Sen. Gary Hart has again made the party nominating process an issue.

## The post-1968 reforms.

The reforms came in the wake of the nomination in 1968 of Vice-President Hubert Humphrey over anti-war Sen. Eugene McCarthy, even though Humphrey had not entered a single primary. In those days, the bulk of convention delegates were chosen by state and local officials, typified by Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley. The primaries merely served to demonstrate the electability of a candidate. But the threat of massive defections by Vietnam-generation Democrats caused the party officials to open up the nominating process after Humphrey's defeat at the hands of Richard Nixon.

The reforms, passed before the 1972 and 1976 elections, began to shift the onus of candidate selection from Democratic power-brokers to the electorate. Candidate delegates were to be chosen in primaries and caucuses and apportioned according to a candidate's vote. They were also bound to vote for that candidate on the first convention ballot. Without the reforms, Sen. Edmund Muskie or Humphrey rather than Sen. George McGovern would have been the party's nominee in 1972 and Sen. Henry Jackson would probably have been the nominee in 1976. The reforms made it possible for "outsiders" like McGovern (who was really an outsider only to the party's most inner *klatsch*) and Carter to accumulate direct popular support in the early primaries to offset name recognition and organizational support for their opponents.

The reforms first came under attack after McGovern's victory in 1972. Pro-Vietnam War Democrats linked to Sen. Jackson and to AFL-CIO President George Meany and organized into the CDM

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argued that the reforms had not transferred control of the nominating process from an elite to the people, but from an elite responsive to the broader interest of the party to a narrow elite of young professionals opposed to the war and supportive of affirmative action "quotas." In books and articles, including CDM member Jeane Kirkpatrick's *The New Presidential Elite*, the anti-reformers argued that the electorate that voted in primaries and caucuses was no more representative of the Democrats as a whole than the party officials, who were professionally equipped to represent the interests of the entire party. The CDM attack was directed at the process, but its real enemy was the insurgent voting groups that the new process had empowered.

But after Carter used the new process to secure the nomination in 1976 and then proceeded to govern as president in the manner of a moderate Republican, more left-leaning Democrats, including United Auto Workers (UAW) President Douglas Fraser and Gary, Ind., Mayor Richard Hatcher, became critical of the nominating process. They were concerned that the process had made it possible for full-time candidates like Carter, with no other responsibilities and no commitments to Democratic constituency groups, to spend two years wooing voters with personal attention rather than political substance.

When Carter was defeated in 1980, Fraser and Hatcher joined the CDM faction, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and top party officials in amending the rules. They were joined by representatives from Mondale and Sen. Edward Kennedy, who, as the leading candidates for 1984, wanted to block the nomination of a new outsider. The resulting changes, adopted by the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in 1982, signalled a reversal of the post-1968 reform trend:

- They bunched the primaries together on the theory that it would make it more difficult for an outsider to gain the needed



Steve Kagan

Jesse Jackson has repeatedly found himself denied delegates by the new Democratic Party rules.

## Dems debate how to choose nominee

exposure and momentum to overtake a frontrunner.

- They allowed congressional districts to apportion delegates in primaries or caucuses on a "winner-take-all" basis rather than proportionately, and they set a 20-percent minimum vote for candidates to receive voting delegates in a voting district. By this rule, an outsider, attempting to build up strength, could gain 19 percent of the vote in a state primary, come in second to the frontrunner and still get no delegates at all.

- They made 22 percent of the delegates to the nominating convention appointed rather than elected. This group would be made up of party officials, elected Democrats and constituency representatives (e.g. the heads of the state AFL-CIO, National Education Association, National Organization for Women). They also eliminated the rule that bound delegates to vote for their candidate in the first ballot. By this rule, 1968 could theoretically recur.

The new rules didn't work entirely as planned. The anti-reform faction, which, with the exception of Hatcher, backed Mondale, was foiled by the primary voters in New England, who supported Hart at least partly because he was an alternative to the "establishment" candidate. As a result, the frontloading of the primaries aided the outsider Hart by allowing him to pile up early victories without clearly establishing his own credentials as a candidate.

But the new rules have had their most dramatic effect on Jackson's candidacy. He has repeatedly found himself denied delegates by the new rules. For instance, in Arkansas Jackson won about a third of the caucus vote, but because of the 20 percent rule he received only about 17 percent of the delegates. In Mississippi Jackson almost doubled Mondale's caucus vote, but received 27 percent of the delegates to 30 percent for Mondale. In Michigan Jackson received 17 percent of the caucus vote, but only 7 percent of the delegates. And most recently, in Virginia, Jackson drew 32 percent of the caucus vote to 29 percent for Mondale and 20 percent for an uncommitted slate. But Mondale received 17 delegates, the uncommitted slate 16 and Jackson 14.

As a result of this disparity between votes and delegates, Jackson—and theoretically any third candidate—will be denied the opportunity to prevent either of the leading candidates from winning a majority. This means that his constituency will be deprived of representation at the convention, because in a deadlocked convention, he—or any other third candidate—would have been able to bargain with the leading candidates on their behalf.

Jackson and Hart have also been damaged by the DNC's failure to correct existing inequities in the nominating process. Michigan's caucuses resembled elections in the Soviet Union in every feature except turnout. There were few caucus locations—337 in a state of 58,000 square miles—and their locations were not widely advertised. Many were in pro-Mondale UAW halls. The ballot was open—voters had to sign their name, address and presidential preference on the ballot.

Some in the anti-reform faction simply have contempt for the average voter. But other Democrats, like the UAW's Fraser, appear to believe that the post-1968 reforms actually damaged the Democratic process.

These reform opponents make two different arguments: first, the reforms, by damaging the party system, have made presidents less accountable and have therefore made Watergate-type scandals more likely; second, the candidates chosen by the new nominating process have either been unrepresentative of the party or unqualified for the presidency. Running through both arguments is a preference for the European or Canadian party system over the American.

Mondale was one of the first Democrats to make the anti-

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## IN THESE TIMES

By Joan Walsh

CHICAGO

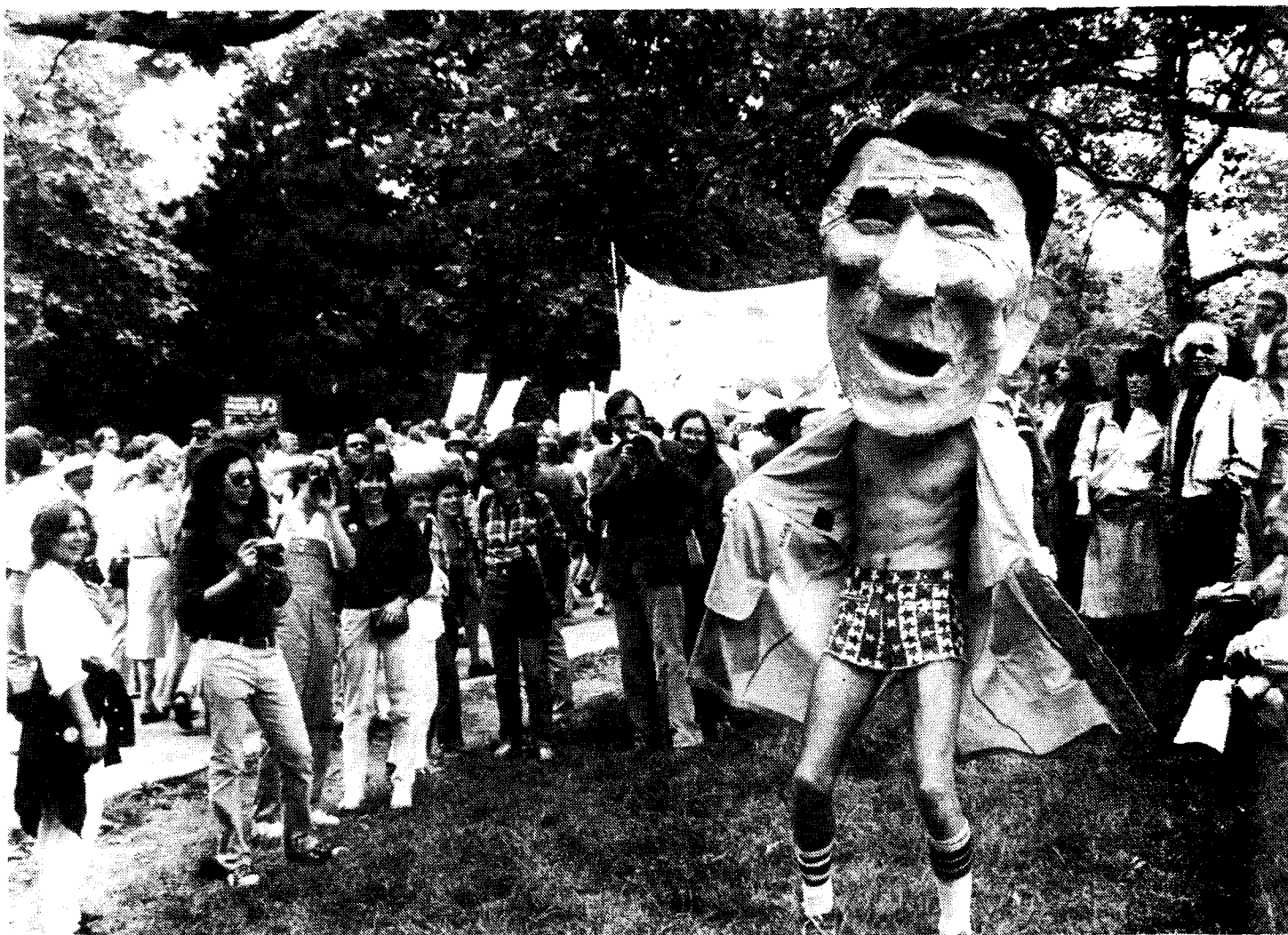
**W**HEN THE CALIFORNIA Nuclear Weapons Freeze referendum began to gather support in the summer of 1982, the campaign ran into a dilemma: as it raised voters' awareness of nuclear politics, should it also work to elect pro-Freeze candidates and defeat the referendum's enemies in that November's congressional races?

In Northern California the debate resulted in a tactical split and the formation of a Voting Power Political Action Committee (PAC); in Southern California the fissure opened over whether to work against staunchly anti-Freeze, pro-Reagan U.S. Rep. Robert Lagomarsino (R-Santa Barbara), who became a major Voting Power PAC target. Despite those divisions, the dominant sentiment of the time was non-partisan—neither parties nor candidates could be written off, the reasoning went, if the fledgling crusade was ever to gather majority support. The Freeze won, but so did Lagomarsino.

What a difference two years makes. In 1984, the proliferation of state and national peace PACs could make arms control backers one of November's most formidable political forces. Iowa has its own STAR (Stop the Arms Race) PAC; so does the venerable arms control lobby, SANE. The Council for a Liveable World has had a Senate PAC since 1962 (an early endorsee was candidate George McGovern); now it has a House organization, PEACE PAC. But most significant, if only numerically, is the nuclear freeze campaign's effort, Freeze Voter '84, a national organization with 33 affiliated state PACs.

Incorporated last summer, Freeze Voter '84 is a response to the limits of the freeze campaign's legislative strategy. While up to 70 percent of all Americans polled support a verifiable, bilateral nuclear weapons freeze, their numbers are not reflected in the Senate, which voted down the freeze last year. And even in the House, where a freeze resolution passed in 1983, some politicians suffer from arms control schizophrenia, casting votes for the politically popular freeze, and then for the MX and other destabilizing

# Peace PACs proliferate as freeze changes tactics



Peggy McMahon

**“We tried changing the politicians’ minds—now we’re trying to change the politicians.”**  
—Bill Curry

weapons as well. Says Freeze Voter '84 Executive Director Bill Curry, “We tried changing the politicians’ minds; now we’re trying to change the politicians.”

To that end, Freeze Voter's electoral strategy concentrates on its most formidable resource—people. The center of its plan is an ambitious door-to-door canvass in which volunteers comb neighborhoods to identify arms control supporters who will pledge to make the freeze their vote-deciding factor when choosing a candidate. Then, after the state PACs in coordination with the national organization decide on endorsements, volunteers return to those identified freeze voters with candidate information. On election day those voters are contacted once again in a get-out-the-vote effort organized with the candidate's campaign.

The canvasses began with a 10-city trial in December that grew to a 100-city effort by March. But the best electoral test of the process so far came in Illinois, where

Freeze Voter endorsed U.S. Rep. Paul Simon in the March 20 Democratic primary. After Freeze Voter's late February endorsement, volunteers continued their weeks-old canvass effort, now carrying Simon literature and urging support for him. Freeze Voter sent out 10,000 pieces of direct mail announcing its endorsement to previously canvassed households, freeze campaign members and the media. The national organization sent in a staff member to coordinate freeze volunteers with the Simon campaign in Chicago and two field operatives to work in Peoria and Joliet. On election day some 300 Freeze Voter volunteers worked for Simon around the state, staffing phone banks and other voter-turnout efforts.

“We’ve successfully contacted all the freeze voters we had,” said Mary Inger on election afternoon. An Evanston Freeze Voter member, she had come down to work a makeshift phonebank at Lill Street Studios, a ceramics gallery in Chicago's DePaul area. “We have very few of the no-show kind of people, and we’re showing a high Simon turnout. It’s unusual. This is the only phoning I’ve ever done where people say ‘Thank you for calling, yes I remember signing the [freeze] pledge and I think it’s important to vote.’”

In the end the organization got pledges from 7,500 freeze voters in its six-week canvass, says director Bob Stein, a number he believes represents more potential than achievement. He considers it “a dry run for the general election,” when Freeze Voter expects to have 1,000 canvassers working statewide.

Comments Simon field director Dave Wilhelm, “They were great. Some groups give their endorsement and it’s worth a press hit, that’s all—no follow through, no volunteers. They were really helpful—I hope they do the same in the fall.”

## Priority races.

In all, Freeze Voter plans endorsements—which will likely carry staff time and the volunteer canvass—in 30 House and six to 10 Senate races. While many endorsements will hinge on primary outcomes, the group is expected to announce a first round of candidates next week. High on the list will be defending House

incumbents Bruce Morrison (D-CT), Lane Evans (D-IL), Tim Penney (D-MN), Les AuCoin (D-OR), Bob Edgar, Tom Foglietta and Pete Kostmeyer (D-PA). Challengers and primary favorites include Democrats Ken Spaulding and Susan Green in North Carolina and Jane Wells Schooley in Pennsylvania, Dudley Dudley in New Hampshire, Reed Hughes in Florida and Republican Josh Reese in Oregon.

Most of those candidates also appear on the lists of SANE PAC and PEACE PAC, which plan endorsements in twice as many races as Freeze Voter. Their lists also include incumbents Joseph Addabbo (D-NY), Katie Hall (D-IN), Frank McCloskey (D-IN); primary candidates Ruth McFarland (D-OR), Robert Clark (D-MS) and Frances Farley (D-UT).

Senate priorities for the peace groups are less clear, in part because of primary battles in key states like Minnesota and Massachusetts. All the groups have endorsed Simon in Illinois and will support Democrat Lloyd Doggett in the Texas primary, of crucial importance since the announced retirement of John Tower. Both SANE PAC and the Council for a Liveable World have endorsed Norman D'Amours against Sen. Gordon Humphreys (R-NH) and Tom Harkin in Iowa's Democratic primary. Freeze Voter '84, at the request of its Iowa PAC, will wait out the primary until a candidate emerges to face Roger Jepsen in November.

The differences between the endorsement lists don't reflect differing assessments of candidates, but rather the peace groups' differing strengths and strategies. Support from CLW carries money—both in the form of PAC contributions and, more significantly, in fundraising appeals to its members. A direct mail piece on Harkin's behalf raised the Democrat \$32,000, said CLW's John Issacs. Appeals for Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) raised \$24,000; for Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-OR), \$21,000.

SANE PAC endorsements mean money—its top priority candidates, such as Evans, Morrison, Green and Schooley, can expect the maximum \$5,000 primary contribution and \$5,000 in the general election. SANE will also contribute 12 to

15 staff organizers in key races and try to organize its chapters to do campaign work for its endorsed candidates. A SANE organizer has already been assigned to Harkin's campaign in Iowa.

Many of the Freeze Voter endorsements will amount to mini-campaigns, which is why its list is shorter, notes spokesman David Heckman. In addition to scrutinizing a candidate's stand on the freeze and arms control issues before it endorses, the group also looks at whether it can hope to effect a race—examining voter trends and demographics and whether there exists an organized freeze constituency and a pool of volunteers that can be mobilized in the campaign. “We only endorse a very good candidate against a very bad candidate, and if a candidate—good or bad—is real safe, we don't go in,” Heckman says.

Also crucial to the process is consensus between state PACs and the national organization, which has slowed endorsements in some cases. In Iowa, the national organization favored an early Harkin endorsement but bowed to the state PAC, which wanted to wait until after the primary to avoid appearing partisan.

“In Iowa we’ve done a lot of work with Republicans on the freeze, and we’re strongly bipartisan,” says Freeze Voter coordinator Tim Button. “We had been pressured somewhat by the national freeze to endorse [Harkin] early, but they’ve accepted our decision. I’m very pleased about that.”

In Illinois, national Freeze Voter was pushing for a January Simon endorsement, but the Illinois group was working with his staff to clarify—and strengthen—some of Simon's arms control positions, says Freeze Voter field director Chip Reynolds. (In the end, some suggest, the group still jumped too soon: the *Illinois Times*’ “The Case of the Credulous Freezeniks” criticized Freeze Voter for not pushing Simon on his votes for Euromissile deployment, which the Freeze campaign went on record opposing at its December convention.)

## Picking a president.

The problems—and advantages—of consensus-endorsements have been most ap-

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# IN SHORT

## Satisfied for now

A surprise last-minute contract offer by Yale last week prevented a walkout by the university's 1,850-member clerical and technical union (see *In These Times*, April 4). The union—Local 34 of the Federation of University Employees—accepted Yale's offer by a 906-to-353 vote just hours before their final strike deadline, report Carole and Paul Bass. Although the contract does not resolve the salary and benefit issues separating the two sides, it does call for a grievance procedure that includes binding arbitration, union stewards, job audits and a labor-management committee to review individual salary complaints. The contract also gives Local 34 the right to strike if it believes the two sides have not made enough progress on wages and benefits.

Union spokeswoman Jane Krieger claims that these provisions prove that Yale no longer hopes to bust the union, but is bargaining in good faith. After intense community pressure against Yale's stalling tactics, "we've seen a distinct change in their attitude," she said.

## The other Jesse

At a time when Republicans and Democrats alike are rushing to shore up their support of anything Israeli, North Carolina Sen. Jesse Helms has proven to be an anachronism, even in his own conservative circles. In the March 16 *North Carolina Independent*, Mark Pinsky tracks Helms' voting and speaking record and speculates that his opposition to Israeli policy may be based on concerns other than Palestinian nationalism. Pinsky adds that the senator's stands could get him in trouble as he tries to hold on to his North Carolina seat in the November election.

Behind Helms' opposition to U.S. military appropriations for Israel, writes Pinsky, lingers the "aroma of traditional, Old Right anti-Semitism" that may prod the already anti-Helms Jewish community to raise money for his opponent, Gov. Jim Hunt. As evidence Pinsky cites Helms' connections to such anti-Semitic groups as the World Anti-Communist League, which harbors "neo-Nazis from around the globe," and the Pioneer Fund, which echoes Hitler with its stated purpose of promoting "racial betterment." Although Jews in the Southern state have little voter clout, Helms' remarks could begin to shake up his true constituency, the Christian fundamentalists, according to Pinsky. Considering their biblical fervor for Israel's existence, they may be dismayed by Helms' statement to the Senate that "Jews have the option of leaving Israel if the going gets rough" and sit out the close-running battle between Helms and Hunt.

## Back door ballots

Lyndon LaRouche's National Democratic Policy Committee—espousing anti-Semitism, a strong national defense based on laser weapons to "beat back the Soviet threat" and an aversion to the "punk rock music that leads to drug dependence"—won 27 Democratic precinct committeeman positions in suburban Chicago's DuPage County last month. The LaRouche party's victories were based on a strategy used in other states: infiltrating the Democratic Party by zeroing in on weak or unopposed seats. The ultra-right victors will wield little clout in DuPage, however—there are 562 other committeemen and the county is a traditional Republican stronghold. But the "LaRouchies" hope to gain some credibility for their singular worldview, one that casts Henry Kissinger and the Queen of England as arch-enemies because of their control of the international drug trade.

Chip Berlett of the Midwest Research Institute, which keeps tabs on right-wing organizations, estimates that 2,000 LaRouche supporters are vying for offices from dogcatcher to president (LaRouche himself, naturally) across the U.S. He believes their occasional wins signal voter disenchantment with the "usual tap-dancing message the mainstream candidates give to voters. For this reason, they shouldn't be entirely discounted as weirdos because they do have a message some voters latch onto." William Redmond, DuPage party chairman, has a more unflappable view: "I've heard they have some odd ideas, but we won't censor them. If they have some good ideas, we'll listen. If not, we'll vote them down."

## Tough concession

Though the official results won't be available until April 10 or 11, early returns for the United Steelworkers race point to a strong win for Lynn Williams, the acting president since Lloyd McBride's death. With 80 percent of the locals reporting as *In These Times* went to press, Williams had bested Frank McKee 174,631 to 114,500. Although McKee has not yet conceded and his supporters have mentioned that old red flag, election fraud, backers in both camps grudgingly admitted that the hollering may be more show than substance. Said one: "We're steelworkers. It's all a part of our fighting spirit. We're supposed to be sore losers."

—Beth Maschinot

Readers are encouraged to send news clips, interesting reports, eye-opening memos or short articles to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657.



## Union protests Coke closing

**GUATEMALA CITY, GUATEMALA—**Since February 19, 460 workers of the Coca-Cola bottling franchise here have occupied the plant after it was shut down because of "economic insolvency." The owners of the Embotelladora Gualtemalteca (EGSA) failed to warn the workers that the company was suspending operations, and refused to file bankruptcy claims.

The plant union, STEGAC (*Sindicato de Trabajadores de Embotelladora Gualtemalteca, Anexos y Conexos*) claims that the shutdown was orchestrated by Coca-Cola International in order to destroy one of the strongest labor unions in Guatemala. The parent company, however, says the closing was due to "bad management" and "high labor costs" and claims no responsibility for the closing or for the possible reopening of the plant under another franchiser.

The Atlanta-based transnational has been embroiled in past labor disputes at their Guatemala City franchise. Union organizing at the plant in the late '70s led to retributive firings by then-owner John Trotter. Random violence initiated by plant management led to the assassinations of eight STEGAC leaders by 1980.

Meanwhile, the International

Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) led a boycott of Coke that cost the transnational more than \$10 million. Forced to the bargaining table by the boycott, the parent company located and then financed the present franchisers in 1980, stipulating that they would sign a five-year agreement to respect union rights at the plant.

The EGSA is the country's only unionized Coca-Cola plant, paying average wages of \$9.50 a day. The two other plants—though claiming to have unofficially organized "management unions" in the past few months—have no official workers' unions. The wages in those plants are half those at the EGSA. The IUF and STEGAC claim that the two coastal franchises have taken over more of the Guatemala City market in the past year—a further indication that Coca-Cola International was involved in the decision to close EGSA.



STEGAC opposes Coke's decision to close Guatemala plant.

The *Financial Times* of London also said that the franchisers' rationale for the shutdown was covering other tracks. Claiming that "the idea of Coca-Cola going broke in Guatemala is absurd," the *Times* charges that two sets of books were kept, with only the false ones showing the company bankrupt. The paper also claimed that profits were being assigned to dummy accounts and then eventually returned to the franchisers' private accounts—a claim that the parent company does not dispute.

The Guatemalan government is reacting to the shutdown with caution. Although on the day of the closing Minister of Labor Carlos Padilla Natareno called the closing "surprising and unexpected" because Coca-Cola had one of the highest sales levels of any product in the country, he has since made few public statements about the incident. Union leaders speculate that Padilla is in a tenuous position—unwilling to strengthen STEGAC by supporting the workers' occupation yet wanting to save a relatively valuable investment for the country. The timing of the shutdown was also awkward for the Guatemalan government. The Human Rights Commission was in session in Geneva, Switzerland, and Ronald Reagan's proposal for more aid to Guatemala was before the Congress.

But as unionists sit inside the plant waiting for Coca-Cola International to claim responsibility and reopen the plant, the government set up a temporary roadblock outside the plant gates with a warning that they would shoot any trespassers. In early March, one passenger was killed and two were injured when they failed to show their papers to the military.

Talk of another IUF-initiated boycott has begun in Europe.

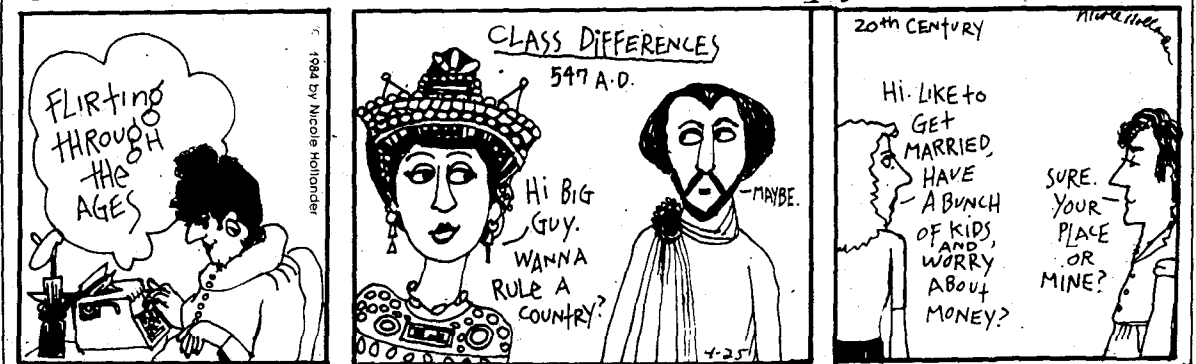
And STEGAC and IUF say they're prepared to stay in the plant for six months if necessary. Meanwhile, the unionists hope that the violence of the late '70s is not repeated.

A 16mm film recounting the plant's occupation will be available at the end of April from Schnall Films, 357 West 36th St., No. 5, New York, NY 10018.

—Jim Wilson and Peter Schnall

## SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander







ELECTION '84

Steve Kagan

By Rachel Gorlin

NEW YORK CITY

**J**ESSE JACKSON SHOULD NEVER have referred to New York as 'Hymietown,' and Mondale and Hart shouldn't have acted as though it was," quipped Jimmy Breslin, this city's street-wise columnist, as he summarized the single biggest "issue" in the April 3 New York State Democratic primary.

Leaving the black voters to Jackson, Hart and Mondale assiduously courted the Jewish vote (reputed to be 33 percent of those participating in the primary) with promises that each was more solid than his opponent in his support of moving the U.S.-Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem and of other measures ensuring Israel's security. Mondale had the endorsement of New York City Mayor Ed Koch, generally a popular figure in the state's Jewish community, and of most Jewish elected officials. Hart got late endorsements from several leading Jewish politicians, including Rep. Charles E. Schumer, a well-regarded liberal, whose district in Brooklyn may well be the "most Jewish" in the country. Eighty-four percent of the state's Jewish voters apparently were more comfortable with "the guy we knew," Mondale, regardless of their reservations about his links to the Carter administration's Middle East policies.

This narrow campaign left many New Yorkers without a clear sense of what Hart and Mondale thought about other concerns closer to home. Since the candidates generally failed to define the issues, their pitches crept into New Yorkers' consciousness in some strange ways: a derelict followed Mayor Koch through a tour of new facilities for the homeless chanting Walter Mondale's recently adopted battle cry, "Where's the beef?"; *New York* magazine's weekly word-play competition recently sought witty malapropisms, and one of the leading entries was "Gary Hart has new wide ears."

The Hart campaign thought "electability" against President Reagan in November might be compelling. Their widely circulated campaign literature began, in large type, "Only Gary Hart's new leadership will beat Ronald Reagan in November." But, as one Wednesday-morning quarterback in the campaign put it, "We forgot that New Yorkers hate to be told that they should go along with the rest of the country because some guy from Colorado told them they should."

Mondale's people managed to equate Hart's vote against the Chrysler bail-out with an (imaginary) antipathy to New York. "You'd think he'd voted against the New York City loan guarantees, in-

stead of for them," mused John Rowan, a Queens leader of Vietnam Veterans of America and a Hart volunteer.

The National Organization for Women (NOW), many of whose members (including Betty Friedan) were running as delegate candidates in congressional districts around the state, put out literature that capably dismissed Hart's stands on "women's issues." For example, next to the statement "Strongly championed passage of the Equal Rights Amendment" only the box next to Mondale's name was checked, with Jackson left off the score-board entirely.

This provoked considerable anger from feminists supporting Hart. Mary Geissman, a Democratic reform district leader in Manhattan and a Hart campaign worker, said, "I pledged to send in my NOW dues. But instead they're going to get a letter from me about the tactics they've used in this campaign. And it's all done by a supposedly independent committee so that the Mondale campaign can disavow any responsibility."

#### TV attacks.

Hart's TV commercials attacked Mondale for using Political Action Committee (PAC) funds to support his delegates' campaigns. Mondale badly needed to use that approach in New York because so much of his primary allotment under federal campaign finance laws had been spent early, before the Hart upswing.

But in a state where almost 40 percent of the primary voters were estimated to live in union households, such attacks on Mondale didn't count as much as they might elsewhere. All three camps agreed that union funds, volunteers and voters played a decisive role in Mondale's 47 percent plurality state-wide.

At a Women for Mondale rally in Manhattan's Herald Square the day before the primary, workers from the nearby garment district and members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union carried banners extolling the qualities of goods "made in America." Hart's opposition to the "domestic content" legislation before Congress is a central issue to the AFL-CIO.

Unlike recent New England primaries where Hart took the union rank and file despite organized labor's support for Mondale, in New York Mondale beat Hart among union members by more than two to one. As a United Federation of Teachers member from New York City put it, "We didn't look at Hart on every issue. We didn't have to. So what if union interests are 'special interests'? They happen to be our interests."

Hart's greatest failing in New York State seems to have been his campaign's inability to make his "new ideas" relevant to New Yorkers' sometimes idiosyncratic concerns. "We want to know that he cares about us, that he has some idea

## New Yorkers go for the 'new' Mondale

what it's like to live here and put up with crime and lousy subways," is how one Brooklyn politician put it. "He should have seemed at least a little *heimish*, a sort of regular guy. Instead, Hart came off like he'd never been to New York before he started campaigning here, and people hate that." Mondale even took the much-vaunted Yuppie vote, though Hart's campaign did attract many heretofore politically inactive Yuppie volunteers.

"It was too little too late," opined John Rowan of Queens. "The poor people involved at the top in the state—like Ted Sorenson—all seemed to be from Manhattan, from the Central Park West cocktail fundraising circle," a source from the Hart campaign noted. "The leadership didn't understand that this should have been a war in the trenches on every front possible. They knew all along how important the New York primary was. I can't believe their statements about how they'd put together the best campaign possible in only three weeks."

While Mondale effectively attacked

**Said one voter, "I liked the way Mondale blew his cool in the debate at Columbia.... He came across human. Hart seemed so cold."**

many aspects of Hart's record in televised debates and in campaign literature, Hart's TV commercials attempted to link Mondale to a Vietnam-style Central American policy. Apparently, these had little impact.

The "new" strong Fritz Mondale won rave reviews in New York. Said one voter, "I like the way he blew his cool in the debate at Columbia, where he told Hart to take those commercials off the air. In fact, I kind of liked Hart's stand better

on getting us out of Central America, but I really responded to Mondale's anger. He came across human, where Hart seemed so cold."

Hart repeatedly lost ground as Mondale accused him of having changed his positions on the nuclear freeze, on moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and on Reagan's cuts in social spending and his economic programs. By the time noted astronomer Carl Sagan of Cornell University, an expert on the effects of nuclear war, appeared at New York University to speak to a group of freeze activists and environmentalists on behalf of Hart the day before the election, Mondale's charges had stuck. One NYU student apparently voiced the sentiments of many when he said, "I really respect Dr. Sagan, but I think I'm still going to vote for Mondale. I just feel more comfortable with him."

Just before the primary, an article appeared in the *New York Times* announcing that Mondale and Hart were now in agreement on the question of U.S. military presence in Central America. Yet whether this meant that the former vice president had changed his position never became part of the public debate.

#### Jackson's own election.

As Hart and Mondale vied for the support of white voters, Jesse Jackson practically held his own election in New York's minority communities—which led to Jackson's best showing yet in a state primary. He garnered 25 percent of the vote coming within two points of Hart's second-place finish. According to Brooklyn State Assembly member Albert Vann, a leader in the Jackson campaign, some black precincts reported a record 90 percent voter turnout on April 3. Since more than 100,000 new voters—most of them black and Hispanic—have registered in the past year in New York City, Jackson may not have been exaggerating when he said in his primary night "victory" speech that "New York City politics will never be the same again."

Black voter turnout was up 100 percent from recent statewide primaries. It is estimated that Jackson received 7 percent of the white vote, which appeared to have cut not into Mondale's support, but into Hart's. Among white voters under 30, Jackson did especially well. At a Harlem rally the Saturday before the primary,

*Continued on page 7*



# Dems

Continued from page 2

Watergate case against party reform. After dropping out of the 1976 presidential race in late 1974, he published a book, *The Accountability of Power*, in which he argued that the quest for the presidential nomination had become a "mindless process from the candidates' perspective, too often a self-defeating one for the parties and frequently an ineffective one for the nation."

Mondale pointed out that by making primaries the principal means of choosing presidential candidates, the parties had weakened their hold over the candidates, which had formerly been exercised through the power of party and public officials in the nominating convention. Mondale invoked the example of European parties, which choose their nominees in conventions of party leaders rather than through popular vote. While not wanting to do away with primaries entirely, Mondale called for finding a "middle ground between consensus politics on the one hand and European-style democracy on the other."

In wake of Hart's victories in New England, numerous Washington Democrats—usually pro-Mondale—expressed skepticism about the primary system's ability to choose the best candidate. The *New Republic*, while insisting on its neutrality, invoked the comparison with the European system. In a post-New Hampshire editorial ("Primary Lunacy"), it warned there "is something ominous about the volatility of the voting public, and something amiss in an electoral system that gives that volatility such free rein. In the parliamentary democracies of Europe, potential leaders work their way up through a system that guarantees that they are experienced and tested national figures."

But the attempt to impose features of the European system on the American—or to justify the revocation of party re-

forms on this basis—fails to take into account fundamental differences between the systems. First, the U.S. does not have a parliamentary system; it elects presidents separately, and the American president is, in design, more powerful than his European counterparts and more independent of his congressional party. Second, the American system of winner-take-all and single-member election districts and the lack of a parliamentary system discourages third and minor parties.

In the pre-1968 system of party nominations, presidents were more accountable to their parties. But the party leaders were less formally responsive to the larger Democratic electorate. As long as the party constituent groups remained vital and growing institutions, and as long as a host of issues did not split the larger electorate, the formal lack of accountability between party and electorate did not matter. Yet when the Vietnam war and civil rights movement divided the party, the formal disparity became a real one, and the party was forced to choose between reform and division.

In many European countries, restricted nominating procedures are not a problem. Prime ministers are responsible to legislative parties and the parties are programmatic vehicles that are responsible to their electorate. There is a direct link between electorate and party and prime minister that is necessarily absent in the American system. If an insurgent group or political minority is shut out of party deliberations and nominations, it can always form a third party and hope to receive its share of parliamentary delegates. In the U.S., such insurgent groups form third parties either out of ideological fantasy (they imagine they are in Europe) or as a last resort, but it is the least effective way of gaining political power.

In Italy, for instance, Jesse Jackson could have formed a third party. If his party received 10 percent of the vote nationally, it would have received about that percentage of parliamentary seats. From this base, it could either form an important part of the governing coalition

or the opposition. By running as a party, it would not damage its own cause, because it would unite later with like-minded parties. In the U.S., however, Jackson's running as an independent would almost surely tip the 1984 election to Ronald Reagan, the man Jackson's constituents fear more than any Democratic contender.

Party reformers might still argue that the European system is preferable to the American. But if they are serious about popular accountability and democracy, then in addition to the European parties' nominating process, they must propose that the U.S. also adopt a parliamentary and proportional system that would allow dissident political minorities to find some expression for their views even if they were shut out of one party's nominating process.

What left-wing Democrats must realize is that the decline of the old American political parties—like the introduction of television to campaigns—is a positive rather than negative development. It began when the Jacksonians took the nominating process out of the hands of Congress; it has continued through the Progressive Era, when direct election of Senators and the referendum and initiative were introduced; and it has found its most recent expression in the Democrats' post-1968 reforms. These reforms, if properly extended (which would mean prohibiting such events as the Michigan caucus), would finally ensure that insurgents have ready access to the American system.

## Popular will.

The anti-reform faction might still argue that if its method of candidate selection had been used, the Democrats would have picked more qualified and electable candidates. But this argument rests on extremely wishful thinking. Although in 1972 McGovern was highly qualified to be president (at least in comparison to any president since), he was unelectable. But so was Muskie, the party establishment's candidate. The problem was not the nominating process, but the Dem-

ocratic electorates' divisions.

In 1976, the establishment's candidate, Sen. Jackson, was probably more qualified than Carter to be president, but he was far less electable. He could not even win the primary in industrial Pennsylvania. In 1980, some Washington insiders tried at the last minute to foist Muskie on the Democratic convention. Although Muskie might have added Maine to the Democratic column, he would probably have lost Georgia.

In 1984, the success of both Hart and Jackson is not indicative of voter volatility, but of new groups within the Democratic electorate that did not receive adequate expression in the old Democratic coalition or in Mondale's establishment-backed candidacy.

In short, there is little reason to believe that if Democratic power-brokers still controlled party nominations the Democrats would have elected more and better presidents from 1972 through the present. Lane Kirkland and former Democratic National Chair Robert Strauss are not philosopher kings. On some subjects, like American policy toward Central America, they may even display less sense than the average voter. Popular democracy is far from flawless—after all, Americans elected Reagan in 1980—but the kind of oligarchy recommended by the anti-reform Democrats leaves even more to be desired.

In the late '80s and '90s, the Democrats will have to unite the traditional groups of ethnic Americans, white Southerners and blue-collar workers with blacks and Hispanics and the college-educated Vietnam generation. They will also have to devise a popular politics that will come to terms with America's decline as a world power and with the decay of its industry and major cities.

The solutions to this country's deepest problems have most often come from the periphery rather than the established center: from the abolitionists and free-soilers in the 1830s and 1840s; from populists, socialists and trade unionists in the Progressive and New Deal eras; and now, perhaps, from precisely those

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movements and ideas that presently find imperfect expression in the candidacies of Gary Hart and Jesse Jackson.

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# Freeze

continued from page 3

parent in Freeze Voter's attempts to pick a presidential candidate. Its national leadership has been known to lean toward Mondale, who has met with them and other members of the Peace Roundtable and pledged support to a host of arms-control initiatives. But a national survey of freeze leaders and grassroots organizers around the country early this year showed opposition to an early endorsement, and no consensus about the best candidate, either.

When Gary Hart's surge raised his standing with freeze supporters—although many still distrust his early support for a weapons buildup and his late sponsorship of the freeze—a second survey went out to try to test the post-New Hampshire waters. But early returns are showing a divided freeze constituency, and Heckman thinks a freeze endorsement may not occur until after the July convention.

Mondale's Cold-War posturing during the Illinois primary campaign "clearly didn't help his cause with our people around the country," Heckman notes. He was grilled about his Central American policies at a March 31 meeting with freeze leaders. He pledged to withdraw troops, but maintain advisors in the region. Meanwhile, "there's been a movement toward Hart, which reflects an

improvement in his stands on our issues," Heckman said. But despite Hart's repudiation of current buildup proposals in response to pressure from Illinois Freeze Voters (*In These Times*, March 21), "we have not been able to get a clear stand against buildup itself, which we believe represents a *carte blanche* for weapons modernization," Heckman said.

Fence-sitting has its advantages, Heckman believes. "It helps us to be able to work with candidates. If an early Mondale endorsement had occurred, our ability to work with the Hart campaign would have been curtailed."

Whatever the outcome of its presidential endorsement, Freeze Voter's greatest impact will be creating electoral structure for the heretofore politically diffuse freeze support. "There's been a growing sense that we have to involve ourselves in the electoral arena," Curry says. "We need to fashion a sophisticated, effective, grassroots network that can counter the dominance of technology and money on the right." Curry divides tradition politics between the liberal-left's "Susan B. Anthony organizing model"—demonstrating, educating and moralizing—and the corporate right's Mark Hanna (the 19th century's Richard Viguerie) model—"dump money into fighting anything that threatens the status quo." A new electoral strategy has to supplement issues-organizing, Curry believes, and he thinks Freeze Voter's sophisticated, people-intensive campaign will do that.

It may not contribute to the predicted voting surge that the Democrats are counting on in November, since voter registration doesn't top its list of projects. "The freeze movement reaches a lot of middle-class people who already vote, so registration campaigns won't have much impact anyway," notes political analyst Curtis Gans.

Its real impact may be in shifting nominal Republicans toward pro-freeze Democrats.

In the Simon campaign, the group will concentrate less on widening his base of support than on narrowing Percy's, Stein notes. "We're going to focus on Percy's

swing vote—independents and liberal Republicans," he said. Likewise, in Iowa Button hopes Freeze Voter's bipartisan efforts will enable it to attract the support of liberal, pro-freeze Republicans—especially women—and turn them against Jepsen.

But even if it doesn't widen the electorate, as the new surge of electoral activity among blacks and women is predicted to do, it will certainly widen the cadre of campaign activists—a critical resource for the cash-poor, people-rich left.

"Freeze Voter may bring in an entirely new group," notes SANE's Mike Mawby. "A lot of their supporters consider the nuclear freeze the issue of the day, and they may not have been active on other arms control issues."

He says their new electoral focus is a welcome boost to the arms control lobby. "They were fervent about staying out of races even we were involved in in '82," he

recalls.

"It's been wonderful to watch freeze people make the leap from trying to influence policy by holding candlelight vigils to electing supportive legislators," says Karen Mulhauser of Citizens Against Nuclear War (CAN). Former director of the decidedly electoral National Abortion Rights Action League, Mulhauser believes freeze activists are learning from the success of the pro-choice campaign. "We brought our activists in to work for pro-choice candidates, and that's the only way you can turn a poll majority for your issue into an electoral majority," she says.

CLW's John Issacs agrees. "The anti-abortionists were perceived as having a real political impact after they appeared to knock off a couple of senators in 1980," he notes. "Arms control people will really have an impact if we're perceived to have knocked off a Jepsen." ■

# N.Y.

continued from page 5

about 20 percent of the several thousand in the crowd were white. This bodes well for the future of the "rainbow coalition" that some believe may spell doom for Mayor Koch in 1985. When Mondale thanked Koch for his support in his televised victory speech on election eve, the crowd at the Jackson headquarters hissed and booed spontaneously.

The *New York Times* estimated that Jackson got no more than 2 percent of the Jewish vote in the state and virtually all of that from voters under 30. But Jackson's role as peacemaker between Mondale and Hart during their joint appearances softened his image as the fiery Southern preacher who had previously referred to New York as "Hymietown."

Once again, New York politics proved to break down along ethnic, rather than class or ideological lines. And the left was split. For example, New York City Council member Ruth Messinger and the *Vil-*

*lage Voice* urged voters to "settle" for Mondale; Mark Green of the Democracy Project appeared at a large Hart rally at NYU; and Barry Commoner and Alfred Vann's Coalition for Community Empowerment campaigned for Jackson. Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor Koch, opponents for the 1982 Democratic gubernatorial nomination, found themselves on the same side for a change—with Mondale. Cuomo took this battle so seriously that Oliver Henkel, Hart's national campaign chair, said on primary night, "There were times during this campaign when I thought Gary was running against Gov. Cuomo."

New Yorkers didn't hear too much about the candidates' urban policies—though Jackson repeatedly pointed out that the "slums" were an issue—and few people seemed to notice. The questions always get framed a little differently in the Empire State. "Are they for or against New York?" asked a Bronx senior citizen at a candidates' forum. "That's all we want to know." ■

*Rachel Gorlin has covered politics and urban affairs for the Village Voice and City Limits.*

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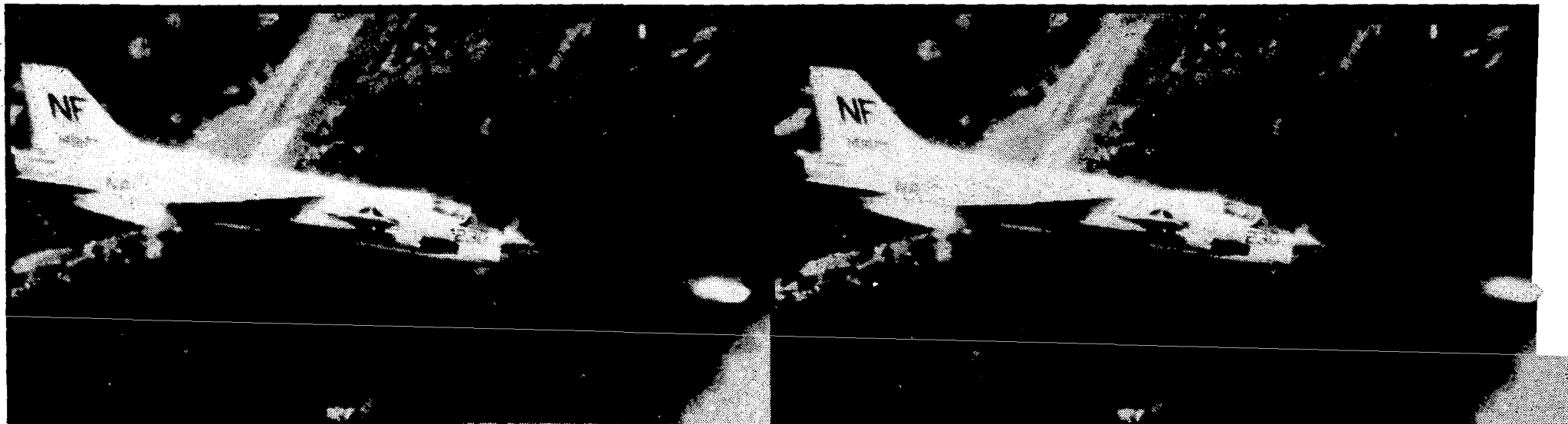
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By Jon Kalish

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## NEW YORK CITY

**A**FTER FIVE YEARS OF MOTIONS, oral arguments and appeals, the huge Agent Orange class action is going to trial. Considered to be the largest personal injury/product liability lawsuit in legal history, the Agent Orange case pits thousands of American and Australian veterans of the war in Vietnam against the seven chemical companies that manufactured the herbicide and the U.S. government. The trial opens May 7 before U.S. District Court Judge Jack Weinstein in Brooklyn.

Lawyers for the veterans say that there are close to 20,000 plaintiffs so far, but they expect that number to climb to between 50,000 and 100,000. When he filed the suit in 1979, attorney Victor Yannacone predicted the litigation would set important precedents in environmental law. "This case will hopefully resolve the question of how victims of toxic insults to the environment who don't manifest their symptoms until years and years later will be recompensed," he said at the time.

Now, with the trial less than a month away, David Dean, the veterans' lead counsel, is confident the vets will prevail. "We're going to win this case," he told a reporter recently in the lobby of the Brooklyn courthouse. "Somebody is going to be paying the innocent children, the veterans and their wives. There are billions of dollars worth of injuries."

Since 1978 Vietnam veterans have been complaining about a wide variety of medical problems that they claim result from their exposure to Agent Orange. Many suffer from a severe skin rash called chloracne. The veterans say liver disease, neurological disorders and cancer were also caused by Agent Orange. The lawsuit seeks damages for wives who have miscarried and for children who were born with what one lawyer calls a "bizarre pattern of polygenetic birth defects," including missing or deformed limbs and multiple internal organs.

Two key issues will be settled at the trial: first, whether the veterans' exposure to the herbicide caused the health problems; and second, who should be held liable—the chemical companies or the government. The veterans suit named only

manufacturers as defendants, but the manufacturers turned around and slapped the government with a third-party suit. The chemical companies claim that if it is determined that Agent Orange is responsible for the veterans' ills, then the government should be held liable.

"The government controlled the use of the product completely," argues Charles Carey, one of the Dow Chemical Company's in-house lawyers. Dow was the largest producer of Agent Orange and it has been the most vocal of the seven defendants in the suit. The manufacturers have put forth what has been referred to in court as the government-contractor defense. Outside of the courtroom, the veterans and their lawyers call it the Nuremberg defense.

The chemical companies claim that the government established the specifications for Agent Orange, and that the herbicide met those specs. Dow maintains that the dioxin content of each batch of Agent Orange it sold the Defense Department was known to the government.

"There's no question that dioxin was an impurity," says Carey. "There's no question that the government was fully informed about its inclusion in Agent Orange.... The government was aware of it, we were aware of it." The government contracts did allow for less than 2 percent impurities in the herbicide.

### More than an impurity.

But the veterans' lawyers will argue that dioxin is more than just an impurity. "We know that a jury isn't going to feel that anybody who allows poison in a product is complying with any specifications," says David Dean.

The lawyers will argue that it was the chemical companies, not the government, that established the specifications for Agent Orange. Dean says a sworn pre-trial deposition of a Monsanto official and documents from Monsanto's files back up this contention. According to Dean, Monsanto's director of product quality control, Cecil Russel, claimed responsibility for making the specs in a letter he wrote at the time. Dean says that under oath Russel says other chemical companies helped him formulate the specifications.

"We now know that the government didn't establish the specs," Dean says. "We know they were chemical-company specs that were given to the government and the government simply regurgitated

them back to the chemical companies."

Counters Carey, "The government's knowledge exceeded that of the Dow Chemical Company's in relation to Agent Orange and the dioxin levels, before we ever became a contractor. We are prepared to introduce evidence at the trial that the government knew more than we did." Pointing out that the federal government's research program began in the '40s, Carey adds, "It was an extensive, comprehensive program. The government probably knew more about herbicides than any of the defendants."

Some government documents support Carey's claim. One indicates that an Army chemical warfare specialist was aware in 1959 that dioxin had killed several chemical plant workers in Europe. In a pre-trial deposition, a member of the president's scientific advisory panel acknowledges that the health effects of dioxin were discussed in the mid-'60s. But in order to successfully argue its government-contractor defense, the chemical companies must prove that knowledge of dioxin's dangers was possessed by individuals with decision-making power. The veterans' lawyers say the secretary of Defense wasn't informed that dioxin was toxic until 1970.

During the course of the litigation, hundreds of thousands of documents relating to Agent Orange and dioxin have been handed over to the veterans by the chemical companies and the government. Last July one of the veterans' lawyers leaked several devastating Dow documents to the Long Island newspaper *Newsday*. Among them was an internal report dated 1965 that said dioxin could be exceptionally toxic to humans, and that fatalities had been reported in medical literature. That same year Dow's director of toxicology, V.K. Rowe, wrote a letter to a Dow official in Canada in which he said dioxin has "a tremendous potential for producing chloracne and systemic injury." He expressed concern over "restrictive legislation" and said Dow should clean up its own house from within, "rather than having someone from without do it for us."

The 1965 documents are considered to be the most damaging to the defendants of all the evidence and testimony. It's

worth noting that the information wasn't uncovered by a congressional subpoena or an investigative reporter. When asked by an incredulous reporter how he came to possess the documents, attorney Victor Yannacone replied with a grin on his face, "The chemical companies gave them to us."

### New judge moves swiftly.

Judge Weinstein took over the case late last September, after Judge George Pratt, who had presided over four years of pre-trial hearings, was appointed to the Court of Appeals. Weinstein has moved swiftly to restructure the litigation and to bring it to trial. At his first meeting with the three parties, Weinstein announced the May 7 trial date, informed them that the issues of causality and liability would be decided in one trial instead of separate trials and directed the veterans' lawyers to select a handful of "representative plaintiffs" whose cases could be used to decide the issue of causality.

Judge Weinstein rejected the names of deceased veterans when they were included in the first list of representative plaintiffs. "I want live vets," he said. "They're going to have to answer questions about exposure to other chemicals and drug use." The chemical companies have already raised the specter of exposure to other toxic chemicals in Vietnam and the U.S. as well as drug abuse as the cause of the veterans' illnesses.

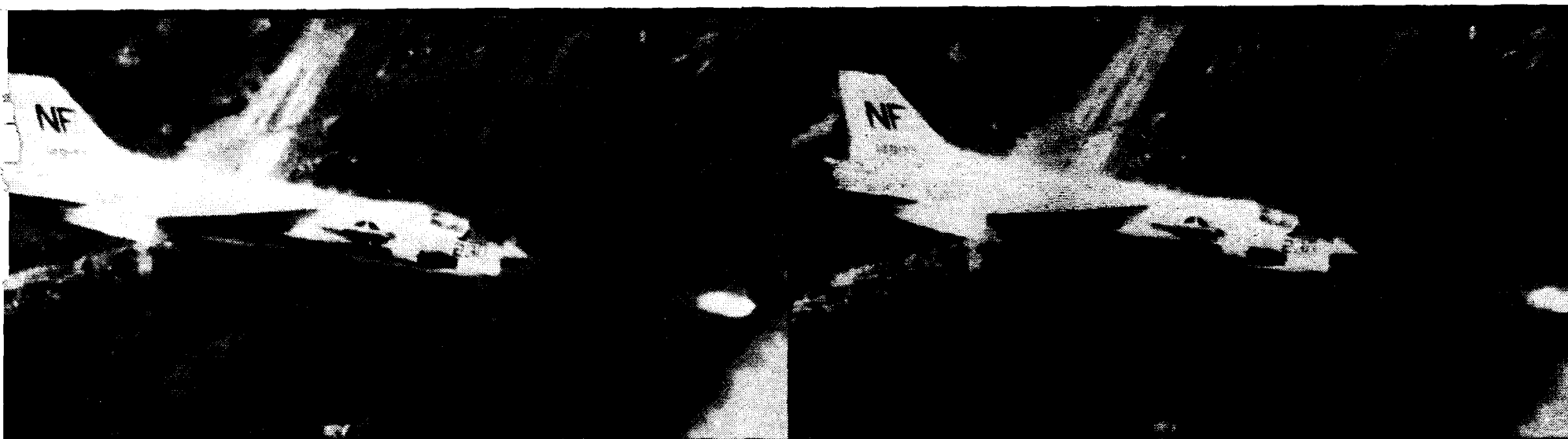
One of the representative plaintiff families lives in Stony Brook, Long Island. Mike and Maureen Ryan, along with their 13-year-old daughter Kerry, have been part of the Agent Orange suit since the earliest days of the litigation. Kerry was born with more than 20 catastrophic birth defects, including missing and multiple organs and deformed limbs. She is featured prominently in the documentary *The Secret Agent* (see accompanying story). Her father Michael suffers from headaches, rapid weight loss and chloracne.

Because of Weinstein's decision to include the government in the case, Justice Department lawyer Arvin Maskin is expected to appeal. In March, when Judge Weinstein asked Maskin if he was prepar-



# WE VETS,

## preside over the Agent Orange trial.



for the trial, Maskin responded that wasn't because he didn't think the government was going to remain in the suit. The angry judge fired back, "You are in the case. The government may be liable for billions of dollars in claims here."

His attitude toward the government is markedly different from Judge Pratt's, though he never signed it, Pratt had thrown up an order dismissing the government from the case. He believed that Supreme Court rulings made it clear that the government could not be held liable in a civil court for a soldier's wartime injuries. But Judge Weinstein ruled that the government could be held liable for the deaths of wives suffering miscarriages and children born with birth defects.

The seven chemical companies named as defendants (Dow, Monsanto, Diamond Shamrock, Hercules, Uniroyal, Thompson, Thompson and Heyward) have hired the finest legal talent available to represent them in the Agent Orange suit. All have obtained outside counsel for the lawsuit. One knowledgeable court source says the manufacturers have spent between \$50 to \$70 million so far to defend themselves.

The veterans' lawyers are not being paid for their time. In fact, their firms have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to finance the lawsuit.

Several of the Long Island law firms that originally handled the suit are no longer involved in the day-to-day running of the case. Included in that group is the firm of Victor Yannacone, who served as the veterans' lead counsel for the first 10 years of the suit. The consortium of Long Island law firms that Yannacone created to try the Agent Orange class action disbanded due to both heavy debt and some serious personality clashes of-ten involving Yannacone, who is known for his courtroom theatrics and unorthodox legal strategy.

"This is no longer the case I brought on in 1979. This is a totally different suit," Yannacone complained between hearings at the state workers' compensation board in Long Island.

He is displeased with the way a new team of lawyers appointed by Judge Weinstein is running the suit. And he has criticized the new lawyers for abandoning the plan to create a trust fund to compensate Agent Orange victims and for com-

plying with Judge Weinstein's order to limit the class to children born with birth defects before January 1 of this year.

Yannacone still personally represents more than 5,000 vets in the Agent Orange suit. Hundreds of lawyers around the country associated with him represent another 11,000 veterans. They have threatened to "opt out" of the class action before the trial starts.

Although Dow is the best-known of the Agent Orange makers, the veterans' lawyers say it is not the worst culprit. That distinction, they say, goes to both Diamond Shamrock and Monsanto, whose herbicides had the highest level of dioxin contamination. In addition to the suit by the veterans, Diamond Shamrock and Monsanto are being sued by workers who made Agent Orange. Diamond Shamrock recently agreed to spend millions of dollars cleaning up dioxin at its old Agent Orange plant in Newark, N.J. The company also faces lawsuits from people who lived near the plant.

The controversy over Agent Orange will likely continue for years. Federal legislation to compensate veterans for chloracne as well as a liver disease known as PCT and soft-tissue cancer has been passed by the House, but faces an uphill battle in the Senate. Federally mandated Agent Orange studies will not be completed until later in the decade. The trial of the Agent Orange class action is scheduled to run from May until October, but appeals are expected to drag on for years.

**Jon Kalish is a New York City-based freelance reporter heard regularly on National Public Radio. He has covered the Agent Orange class action for five years.**

## New film gets to the root problem

*The Secret Agent*, an hour-long film about the dioxin controversy, is a most unusual expose. Made by independent filmmaker Jacki Ochs, it exposes not heroes and villains, not oppressors and victims, but the root problem of one-in-a-series of modern scandals. Going beyond events, it asks how our everyday attitudes about progress, corporate research and military actions encouraged



**Kerry Ryan was born with more than 20 catastrophic defects.**

it to happen, and how those same attitudes make pinpointing responsibility so difficult.

As treated in this documentary, the dioxin debacle becomes a classic social tragedy—the result of a tragic flaw in our economic and cultural design. Unpretentious and low-key throughout, it opens with a statement of purpose: we must examine the story of this herbicide that came back to haunt us because "we must learn what we have done" to avoid similar futures.

The key to understanding is in history. As dioxin was being developed, first for commercial agriculture use and then for Vietnam warfare, those involved in the decision loved it—chemical companies, farmers, generals and GIs. The farmers loved not weeding, the GIs loved not dying in combat.

The consequences are only showing

up now—chronic and killing disease, disfiguring lesions, sterility, deformed children. Meanwhile, dioxin has spread itself thinly over the American landscape, dusting our pavement and soil.

As the chemical chickens come home to roost, it is natural to search for blame, to find the secret agents who sabotaged us. But the film is less interested in pinning labels and pointing fingers than in exploring the logic and world of the decision-makers whose authority has had wide public approval.

For instance, the rep from Dow Chemical, which manufactured the chemical and fought off lawsuits later, offers a litany of denial. His frozen face, his flat affect bespeak a corporate death-in-life. The man from Dow arouses no sympathy, but his demeanor also makes clear that villainy is only one small part of the explanation for the dioxin nightmare.

In this story horror and pity are available in industrial quantities for the drama-seeking filmmaker, but Ochs avoids cheap shots. There's no maudlin dwelling on gruesome sights. Instead, there's a quiet respect for the privacy of dioxin's victims. *The Secret Agent* reveals the underlying horror of living day after day, doctor after doctor, with chronic pain and with the mending of congenital defects.

One terminal cancer patient, a vet, looks blandly into the camera and says in quiet sorrow, "I died in Vietnam and didn't know it." The film makes several visits to the family of a child born with more than 20 defects, letting them talk about their worry, love, anger and fear, and letting the viewer grow aware of the humanity of their crippled daughter.

In a short hour, *The Secret Agent* accomplishes what few essays in any medium do: it reframes the problem. After you see this film, you know that we—you and I—have a problem. And it isn't dioxin—that's only a symptom. The problem is our society's willingness to gamble on its own future—the highest possible stakes—for the preservation of the profit motive.

—Pat Aufderheide

For more information contact Human Arts Assn., 591 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. (212) 925-7995.



# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## INVENTIONS, ET AL.

JOHN JUDIS ATTRIBUTED TO ME things I never said or wrote in his letter responding to me in *In These Times* (ITT, March 14). He has repeated these accusations twice without quoting me either time. I do not and have not opposed elections in Nicaragua under the Sandinistas. I have not and do not condone censorship. Further, I know of no Sandinista who opposes the elections. Therefore, I find puzzling Judis' reference to me "and a small minority of Sandinistas who oppose the elections." Judis, I think, has invented something—a quality not desirable in a reporter.

In his response he uses the phrase "Landau et al." as if he were citing me in some sort of legal brief. I hope this is more positive than his previous label of me as "these leftists."

There are some substantive points, however, that ought to be aired. The more vocal free speech advocates in Nicaragua are not, as Judis writes, the Eden Pastora forces, who are in armed struggle against the government and receive washed money from the CIA via the Conrad Adenauer Foundation in West Germany. Nor are the Miskito forces of Steadman Fagoth very preoccupied with free speech since they also attack from Honduras and receive CIA money. The minority of propertied classes that have remained in Nicaragua, however, are very concerned with the issue, and through their daily press organization *La Prensa* use free speech to attack the Sandinistas' policies, styles and personal characteristics every single day. *La Prensa* has printed outright lies, well-documented by Stuart Holland, British member of Parliament, in his excellent study *Kissinger's Kingdom*. The fact is also that *La Prensa* has been censored on a number of occasions, mostly on issues relating to the war and on what the Sandinistas call "economic lies"—that is, material designed to destabilize or cause economic panic if printed.

These kinds of censorship, though regrettable, fall upon every nation's press during war-time. And Nicaragua is certainly at war—over 1,000 dead and \$100 million in damages from the CIA's war.

On a number of occasions the censors have cut other stories that Sandinista leaders later admitted were cases of excessive zeal or poor judgment. I agree with them. Censorship is bad and, even in wartime, should be exercised with great restraint. But that should not obscure the point, in a socialist newspaper, that there is a context for the issue of free speech. In Nicaragua, the context is one of property—its control and its reproduction. The Sandinistas have not instituted socialism, but a mixed economy. However, they will not relinquish economic control to a minority. That would be betrayal. Surely Judis, a reporter for a socialist newspaper, should be able to grasp that basic element in the class struggle. Or is that also a concept that should be rejected when one speaks and writes about revolution?

Nicaragua is at war—a fact that Judis downplays. The war is with the U.S. The U.S. proxies have changed in Nicaragua. In the early days of the Sandinista government, the U.S. gave financial support directly to the private sector and to *La Prensa*. Now the support goes to the armed groups trying to destroy the Sandinistas.

I am sure we would all welcome a shift back to support of *La Prensa*. I would hope that the most elementary level of solidarity still remains in people who call themselves socialists and indeed write for socialist newspapers, and that priorities should be carefully selected on that basis. I would suggest that Judis stop beating up on the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, since he knows little about them and has not investigated the scene, and stop berating "those leftists" and "Landau, et al." for things they have not said and instead begin to focus whatever energy he has on the source of war and havoc in Central America. This does not mean taking an uncritical ap-

proach to Nicaragua, but rather one that weighs the scales of relative justice and humanity. On such a scale the sins of the Sandinistas pale before the crimes of Reagan. As I wrote in the September 1983 *Socialist Review*:

"Nicaragua has little to offer as a model for reconstruction in the United States. Its different history and level of social development mean that Nicaraguan needs and American needs are far different qualitatively and quantitatively. We can see what they need more clearly than we see our own political course, and can indeed help them to fill those needs. That is solidarity. It does not mean we must apologize for or excuse their abuses, or remain uncritical while we support their basic right of self-determination and their desire to build a just society. Indeed, commitment and criticism should go together. One of the reasons that Stalinism developed was precisely the dictum of the Communist International that equated the need to defend the Soviet Union with silence or apology over the incredible crimes committed there.

"Thus far the Nicaraguans have shown that they can accept criticism from those who are committed to their goals. On issues like the Miskito Indian 'handling' and basic civil liberties questions, the Nicaraguan leaders have not only listened to but courted advice and criticism from those who have proven their solidarity.

"Perhaps the Nicaraguan revolution might help the left in the United States to mature by engaging us in this critical and supportive relationship. Once we understand that Nicaragua is not our model, we can relate to it in realistic terms, the way we should relate to all political developments, even those with the romantic and enticing bubble of revolution around them."

—Saul Landau

Institute for Policy Studies  
Washington

## DISSERVICE TO COMMON SENSE

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOHN JUDIS and Saul Landau (ITT, March 14) makes it clear that Judis has little or no knowledge of the reality of Nicaragua, which he apparently considers a pale reflection of the Soviet Union. Judis censors his critics on the basis of views which are a burlesque of reality.

Item: Eden Pastora is described as the "non-CIA" opposition. Perhaps Judis was out of town when Pastora and his comrades-in-arms admitted taking money from the CIA, but even a cursory reading of almost any account would have revealed this fact to him.

Item: Judis is mightily in favor of "multiparty elections." Fine, so are the Nicaraguans. Their commitment to such elections was made clear from the first days of the revolution. The only change made in the commitment was to move the elections up from 1985 to November 1984.

—Robert L. Borosage

Director, Institute for Policy Studies  
Washington

Item: Judis is for a "mixed economy and political pluralism." Fine, so are the Sandinistas. They have created a new class of small land-owners. They have given generous subsidies to private industry to keep it producing, even though its owners would not invest. Perhaps they are guilty of seeking to "over-manage" the economy, as Judis claims, but if so, it is a matter of degree and judgment, not principle. Judis may have something sensible to say about their judgment once he visits the country and finds out something about it.

As for political pluralism, Nicaragua is not the Soviet Union. Many parties exist. They hold meetings; their proceedings are reported in the press. U.S. embassy officials describe them as insignificant. "Patridos de sofa" (the members could fit on a large sofa) is how they are referred to in the revolutionary confines of Reagan's embassy in Managua. The real opposition force is the Catholic Church which functions powerfully. There is far more political pluralism in Nicaragua—which guarantees the safety of the person—than in El Salvador in which the opposition is simply murdered. In Nicaragua, the reactionary archbishop who counseled Catholics to refuse the draft—questioning the very legitimacy of the state—had his homilies removed from the radio airways (but not from the pages of *La Prensa*). In El Salvador, the archbishop who called for an end to the violence was murdered by the regime's death squads. Yet Judis seems far more concerned about political space in Nicaragua than El Salvador.

This comparison is not irrelevant. The entire thrust of the Carnegie Report which Judis so fulsomely praises is to establish a symmetry between El Salvador and Nicaragua, recommending negotiated settlements in both countries.

Judis embraces this symmetry, but this is a grotesque disservice to common sense. In El Salvador, a hollow regime propped up by massive U.S. aid faces a broad-based opposition which controls significant sections of the country. (In private, U.S. State Department officials contemptuously describe the Salvadoran regime as a "platform" for U.S. intervention.) In Nicaragua, a popular revolutionary government is at war with covert armies armed and funded by the CIA who have been able to establish no popular base within the country. The Reagan embassy in Managua admits that the government is very popular and the opposition *contras* have failed to gain any significant support. (The sole exception is the Miskito rebellion—and it is toward the Miskitos that the Nicaraguans have offered amnesty.)

To suggest that U.S. policy should insist on negotiations in both countries is simply to adopt an imperial assumption. This is to be expected of many of the Carnegie Report authors. It is not to be expected of *In These Times*.

John B. Judis replies: As was revealed in Newsweek and elsewhere after my exchange with Landau, Pastora has begun to accept CIA funds. There may still be grounds, however, for the Sandinistas to negotiate with him. I am glad to learn that Landau favors elections. From his article and response to me, where he identified the demand for political rights with the attempt to subvert the Sandinista revolution, I inferred otherwise. Borosage's reply is based on misreading my position. I never suggested that Nicaragua was "a pale reflection of the Soviet Union," only that its government had allied itself internationally with the Soviet Union.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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# PERSPECTIVES

## Reagan runs into religious left

By Ed Griffin

**O**N MARCH 19 PRESIDENT Reagan called opponents of his Central America policy "either naive or downright phony." As he spoke, 1,500 of those whom he denounced were on Capitol Hill bringing a message of non-intervention and self-determination to a Congress torn between waffling and caving in on the issue of aid to Central America.

Most of the people lobbying on the hill were organized by religious groups, as participants in Central America Week. Their presence in Washington and the thousands of vigils, protests, sit-ins and marches across the nation reveal once again the sharp conflict between religion, organized or otherwise, and the state regarding policy toward Central America.

That voice rang out most dramatically in 1980, when Archbishop Oscar Romero called from his pulpit to then-President Carter not to send military aid to the armed forces (the sum in question was \$5 million recommended by the Kissinger Commission). Romero foresaw that he might be killed for his advocacy of the poor and human rights and that more guns for the Salvadoran military would mean only more mutilated cadavers on the side of the road each morning. Tragically, he was right on both counts.

Romero's murder, in March 1980, did not end the Church's opposition to military aid. Although divisions in the Salvadoran episcopal conference have occurred in the intervening years (and they have been greatly distorted in some news accounts), the Church under the leadership of Rivera y Damas, has been clear and consistent on two major points. One is that the government and armed forces of El Salvador should enter into a dialog with the guerrillas and the political opposition, and the other is that shipments of arms from outside serve only to prolong and intensify the conflict.

The Bishop's position has been echoed in the U.S. by churches and religious organizations of all denominations, creating an extraordinary and perhaps unprecedented tension between church and state on a foreign policy issue. More than 20 national religious bodies have publicly opposed further U.S. intervention in El Salvador; not a single major religious group supports the thrust of current policy toward Central America.

This has caused considerable preoccupation in the White House and the State Department, and for very good reasons. The church-based opposition has been highly visible, credible and persuasive. After all, the murder of Romero and four U.S. missionary women first propelled Central America onto the front pages and ignited the movement in solidarity with the Salvadoran people. The Bishop's repeated public statements and testimony before Congress and the Commission itself have given a great deal of support to that movement at all levels.

Yet the Bishops are just the tip of the iceberg. Militant church people around the world, but especially in the U.S., are risking their reputations and even their lives to repudiate the American-abetted violence. Nuns have blocked roads in Los Angeles to stop the deportation of refugees and held sit-ins in Washington to protest the arms shipments that created those refugees. Missionaries who return from El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua are touring the country, their experience giving the lie to the official gov-

ernment line. Letters and a constant stream of visitors from churches are carrying to Congress the message to trade in the policies of intervention for policies of negotiation.

Fr. Roy Bourgeois is serving time in federal prison for his animated attempts to encourage the defection of Salvadoran troops being trained at Fort Benning, Ga. One hundred churches have declared themselves sanctuaries, harboring refugees from Central America in violation of immigration law that would send them back to face war and persecution. The activist stance of the Maryknoll missionaries remains a thorn in the side of the State Department, reminding them of the crime they would rather forget.

Down on the Nicaraguan border, delegations from churches around the U.S. are holding a rotating vigil called "Witness for Peace" and working for the consolidation of the Sandinista revolution, just miles from the camps where the CIA's secret army regrouped after its raids of terror. Dozens of U.S. cities host weekly "picket and pray" vigils at federal facilities, and the anniversary of Archbishop Romero's death has become part of the liturgical calendar for many congregations.

In Congress, the churches have been a major force in stimulating the meager op-

*The gap between the churches and the administration reflects deeply different views of the third world.*

position. Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont said last year that, were it not for the churches, Reagan "would be funneling more and more arms down there. If it weren't for them you'd probably have a few lonely voices speaking out with very little support."

Even on factual questions, the Church is an embarrassment to the administration. When President Reagan theorized that the left is responsible for the death squads, and the Pentagon's Fred Ikle blamed the guerrillas for 40 percent of the political murders in El Salvador, the media turned to the Church for comment. The Legal Aid Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, one of the few credible sources in the country, cited their statistics for the opening 10 months of 1983—4,113 civilians murdered by the security forces, the army and the right-wing death squad, and 67 killed by the guerrillas.

Not even the Magana government argues with these figures. And so the Reagan team emerged with egg on its face once again. By now, however, they had learned not to do battle openly with Church leaders.

In last year's battle over funding, George Shultz got angry at a congressional hearing and attacked "churchmen who want to see Soviet influence in El Salvador improved." His comments followed a question that included quotations from Rivera y Damas and the Pope. The Catholic bishops were joined by seven religious orders, six Protestant churches and the National Council of Churches in chastising Shultz, who later wished he had bitten his tongue.

Under both Alexander Haig and Shultz the State Department has held special

Central America briefings for clergy and trained congressional aides in dealing with religious opposition to military aid.

Recognizing that neither gentle persuasion nor frontal assaults would penetrate the determination of church leaders, the administration decided to "go to the source" of funding for the Central American war, Congress and the taxpayers. Thus was born the Kissinger Commission. At the Commission's christening last summer, the president entrusted the members with the sacred duty to "warn the American people of the real dangers on our borders." (Ironically, 5,000 Marines were massing in Honduras and U.S. warships were steaming toward Nicaragua at the time).

Reagan sought to incorporate the late Cardinal Terence Cooke into the Commission, but Cooke's heavy schedule made his participation impossible. In any case, his untimely death would have frustrated the administration's principal motive for inviting him—to get a Catholic seal of approval from a respected cleric for the "national consensus" announced at the end of the Commission's work. But no religious leaders would lend their reputation to the enterprise.

Such tactics demonstrate that the administration still underestimates the depth and misreads the motives of the church-based opposition to its policies in Central America. Even some who share that opposition fail to understand the reasons behind the churches' insistence that there is another way out of the quagmire. Superficial analyses point to a new activist spirit in the churches, evidenced by their prominent role in the nuclear issue. Others see remorse for not having awakened sooner to the tragedy of Vietnam as the motor that propels the churches so forcefully into the Central America debate.

In reality, while these and other contributing factors play their part, the gap between the administration and the churches grows out of a fundamentally different perception of the Third World, particularly Latin America, and the U.S. role in it. The Church's viewpoint is formed largely by listening to its southern counterpart. The Reagan view, expounded so well by Kissinger, is informed by the same corporate interests and ideology of national security that has motivated past policies.

The U.S. Catholic bishops have emphasized over and over that the key to understanding Central America lies in identifying, as the Salvadoran Church has done, with the poor, and from that experience understanding the injustices that have brought the region to revolt.

In making the assessment that poverty, not outside agitators, underlie the

region's troubles, the bishops are guided by the experience of the Latin American Church, which has been a source of concern to U.S. policymakers at least since 1969.

That was the year in which another conservative Republican president chose another well-known vanquished Republican "liberal" to head a mission to Latin America. In his report to President Nixon, Nelson Rockefeller noted that the status quo in Latin America rested on three pillars: the military, business and the Church. This unholy trinity could no longer be counted on, in part because the Church could no longer be trusted and was subject to penetration by subversive elements.

Rockefeller's report carried rhetoric similar to Kissinger's, bemoaning U.S. neglect of the region and lifting up the "challenge" that it presented. It also recommended grandiose and high-priced schemes to "develop" the continent before the Communists subverted it, and to strengthen internal security forces if U.S.-styled development wasn't enough to keep the natives satisfied.

Ironically, Henry Kissinger was the man entrusted by Nixon to carry out the policies recommended by Rockefeller. It was under Kissinger's watch that democracy was extinguished in Chile, and a reign of terror, involving persecution of the Church and anyone else who voiced the need for social change, was unleashed from Uruguay all the way to Guatemala and even Mexico. Kissinger's focus on security considerations to the detriment of human rights and social justice is a hefty part of the legacy of neglect to which his current report alludes. His support of the rise of military dictatorships in the late '60s and early '70s helped prepare the way for the present turbulence in the region.

Rockefeller's report mentioned, in a footnote, the Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellin, Colombia, in 1968. The document which came out of Medellin announced a new direction for the Church, guided by a "preferential option for the poor."

Fifteen years later, in warning the American people about the dangers of subversion to the south, Kissinger evokes the language of Medellin, but his interpretation of the bishops' thrust is questionable at best.

In the last paragraph of the section on the "Economic Challenge," the Kissinger report mentions the problem of poverty, noting that the Church at Medellin spoke of the need for a "preferential option" to concentrate public policy and public effort on a social ethic of responsibility for "the poor."

The Church has begun to learn what it means to share the fate of the poor. Oscar Romero spoke prophetically these words: "One who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor. And in El Salvador we know what the fate of the poor signifies: to disappear, to be tortured, to be captive—and to be found dead."

Ed Griffin works with the Interreligious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America. He has written for the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune and The Nation.

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By Roberta Manning

*This is the second of a two-part series.*

**R**ECENT SOVIET MOVES toward economic reform took on new force and vigor last autumn when elections within the ruling Communist Party began to unfold and bring a new generation of Soviet leaders to the threshold of national political power. Until recently, Western Soviet specialists have ignored Party elections as a source of political change within the Soviet system. In the last several years, however, social historians, working with Communist Party archives captured by the Germans in World War II, have begun to question this traditional wisdom, discovering to their surprise that Party elections in the past have at times produced major changes in Party leadership, especially at the local and provincial levels. Such is also apparently the case in many contemporary one-party states in Africa.

Leadership turnover rates appear to be particularly marked whenever the top Party leadership moves to encourage the criticism and replacement of local leaders on the part of the Party rank and file, as Soviet leaders did in the second half of

## PERSPECTIVES

# A new generation of Soviet leaders?

General Secretary—and lower Party organs through the persons of the provincial first secretaries, a significant proportion of whom were essentially “lame ducks,” prevented action.

### Freewheeling.

The 1983 elections proceeded in a more freewheeling fashion than is normally true of Party elections, as the press followed Andropov's lead in calling for criticism of leaders and rank-and-file involvement on a more spontaneous and less directed basis than in the past. Local Party organizations that failed to heed these calls were hauled over the coals by *Pravda* for “organizing the discussions”

from the Party and even occasional arrests, prompting some Western reporters, ignorant of Party procedures, to attribute the leadership turnover caused by the elections to “purges.”

The overall turnover rate among Party secretaries and members of Party committees appears to have been higher than usual and to be most far-reaching (as is usually the case) in the lower depths of the Party and in the Party committees. Almost a third of the powerful 150 provincial first secretaries have been replaced in the course of the elections, with half of those replaced retiring under pressure from above and being given expressions of gratitude for their past work by the

So far, the full impact of the elections on the national level has yet to be fully realized, since the new provincial first secretaries can be added to the Central Committee only on the authorization of a national Party congress. Such a congress is not scheduled to meet until 1985. This situation may well account for the selection of yet another aged and ailing General Secretary like Konstantin Chernenko, who can hardly be expected to remain in office for long. Already, however, the removal of demoted or retiring provincial first secretaries from the Central Committee (which does not evidently require the approval of a Party congress) has strengthened the hand of reform elements, resulting in the Central Committee's endorsement in December of important experiments in enterprise autonomy that had been turned down by that body last June.

### The new leadership.

The pattern of promotions to national office in recent months, both before and after the elections, suggests that the rising force in Soviet politics are men like Gorbachev, with decades of experience in local government. They are 20 to 25 years younger than Andropov and Chernenko. And they are far better educated than their predecessors, having received educations comparable to the leaders of other lands, in contrast to the Brezhnev-Andropov-Chernenko generation, who managed to enter engineering programs and institutions to train Party ideologists without completing much more than elementary school, under the open admissions policies favoring working-class youths in the late '20s and early '30s. Most of the current new appointees to high offices entered the Party in the early to mid-'50s, shortly before or during Nikita Khrushchev's attack on the crimes of the Stalin era at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, so their political experience lies almost entirely in the post-Stalin era.

As this generation of locally oriented leaders increasingly takes over the reins of power on the national level from a generation of men long out of touch with local life, major changes in the structure of the central Soviet government and its relationship to the localities and the populace cannot be ruled out. Party elections have been followed by renewed press calls for public participation, an end to “petty administrative tutelage,” “democratic monitoring” of management and “the perfection of socialist democracy,” which has been judged and found publicly to be wanting. Party ideologists, usually deemed the most conservative force in Soviet society by Western Sovietologists, have recently emerged as some of the strongest advocates of far-reaching initiatives to involve the populace in government. This is being done on the ground that ideological work is hindered whenever “real socialism” fails to live up to its own ideals.

Soviet policy debates on issues as diverse as economic reform and the proposed revamping of the Soviet educational system from top to bottom currently favored by Chernenko, are routinely studded with terms like “autonomy,” “independence,” “initiative,” “creativity,” “risk-taking” and “publicity,” qualities not usually associated with Soviet life. The search for the appropriate economic and political mechanisms suitable for an industrialized socialist society — “developed socialism” as the Soviets currently call it—is likely to occupy a protracted period of time. Today's reformers are characterized by a strong pragmatic orientation and seem to prefer testing their “new ideas” on a small scale before implementing them across the board, in contrast to the grand but costly upheavals characteristic of Khrushchev and Stalin. Whatever solutions this generation of Soviet reformers finally come up with, their search is likely to prove exciting, especially since the more sophisticated reformers realize that such a quest may well prove to be a continuous one. ■

*Roberta Manning teaches Russian history at Boston college.*



Photographer unknown

last year. Not long after the elections were announced last summer, General Secretary Andropov stressed that all leaders who “could not cope with present demands” should be replaced. On August 15, in one of his last public appearances, Andropov addressed a large meeting of elderly “Party veterans” in the Kremlin. Praising the veterans' past services, Andropov gently informed them that they would have to be supplanted by members of the younger generation. He promised to facilitate this transition by finding “new roles” for the veterans and attempting to alleviate the psychological and financial impact of retirement, evidently major obstacles to leadership changes in the USSR.

The 1983 Party elections began in September in workplace Party cells shortly after Yuri Andropov disappeared from public view. Over the next several months the elections slowly worked their way up the Party hierarchy, according to established Party procedures, since higher level Party bodies are elected by and at least nominally accountable to lower level ones. Reports of the election results at the key provincial (*oblast*) level, whose first secretaries occupy 35 percent of the seats on the Party Central Committee, were still trickling in toward the end of January.

The length of time required to run through the electoral process may well explain why no moves were taken to replace Andropov as his illness became terminal. The link between the Party Central Committee—the Party body that elects the

in hopes of covering up local scandals and protecting “untrustworthy people” who were political appointees of influential local leaders.

At times, the press seemed bent on inciting rank-and-file rebellion against Party leaders. On November 23, a lead editorial in *Pravda* took Party committees and industrial managers to task for assuming “a formal bureaucratic attitude” toward press revelations of scandals, mismanagement and abuses on the part of local leaders and executives. The next day, yet another lead editorial admonished: “Great stringency should be displayed against executives at all levels.... Situations in which some Communist executives are beyond the control of Party organizations and beyond criticism also must not be tolerated.” The press also began to stress the importance of the secret ballot in Party elections as a means to hold leaders accountable, which strengthened the hand of the Party rank and file against powerful local leaders.

At every level, the Party elections were preceded by accounting meetings, at which the local first secretaries delivered reports on developments within the local Party organization since the last elections and opened the meeting to discussion from the floor. These meetings were punctuated by the airing of local scandals that are still reverberating through the press, ranging from widespread official corruption in Lipetsk to the coverup of a murder by the police in Gomel, with the connivance of local Party officials. Such revelations resulted in some expulsions

*At the Minsk regional Party conference during recent CP elections, two record-breaking local tractor factory workers are being photographed. Thirty percent of new Party members in the '70s were women.*

poliburo. A quarter of the replaced secretaries, younger men untainted by scandal, were promoted to higher positions in the national Central Committee apparatus in Moscow.

The Party Secretariat, the Central Committee agency in charge of overseeing Party elections and confirming into office newly elected Party secretaries at the regional (*raion*) and provincial (*oblast*) levels, played a more active role in the current elections than was generally true in Brezhnev's day. Then, appointments to the Central Committee resembled life peerages, and secretaries were almost inevitably selected from within local Party organizations. The youngest politburo member, the strongly reform-minded Mikhail Gorbachev, was given personal responsibility for overseeing the elections. Utilizing long-overlooked Party regulations dating from the Khrushchev era that limit a Party official's tenure in office, Gorbachev pushed for the retirement of elderly secretaries. He exercised the Secretariat's powers of *nomenklatura* (the right to veto secretaries selected by local Party bodies on the grounds of unsuitability for office) far more forcibly than Brezhnev did to bring in capable, experienced men from outside the Party organization to serve as first secretaries in provinces shaken by scandal.



## PRIVACY

# Big Brother can't watch

By Katie Davis

ONEONTA, NY

Last November a book fell on the floor in the public library here and disrupted more than its silence.

The book, *John Fitzgerald Kennedy: Memorial Address in the Congress of the United States*, fell open to a page covered with black ink. There were scribbled the words, "Reagan killed on 2-18-84 for sure. Ha! Ha! Don't think I'm kidding. I'm not." The word "kidding" was underlined and two other pages had similar death threats.

Marie Bruce, the library's director, reported the threats immediately to the FBI. The next day a U.S. Secret Service agent called her. Bruce described the defaced book to Special Agent Ryan (the Secret Service refused to release the first names of the agents involved), who then asked her to whom the book had last been checked out.

The librarian replied that she couldn't divulge who checked the book out because, under New York state law, library records are confidential. To obtain the information would require a subpoena, she told the agent.

What happened after that has created an unusual stir in this quiet, upstate town of 15,000.

Special Agent Ryan didn't take well to Bruce's legalisms, the librarian recalls. He accused her of being uncooperative and insinuated she was trying to protect the culprit. Bruce says Ryan asked her several more times who had checked the book out. When she continued to refuse to answer, the agent, she says, ended the conversation with a threat: "We can make your life difficult if you don't tell us what we want to know."

The next morning, Special Agent Carlson arrived at the Oneonta library sans subpoena and demanded the borrower records for the book.

Again, Bruce explained that releasing the records was illegal under New York state law CPLR 4509, of which she gave Carlson a copy. "No silly state law supercedes a federal law," Carlson said, according to the librarian.

She asked him which federal law he referred to, but the agent couldn't quote one. Before he left, he insisted that she sign a statement saying that she would be responsible for any attempt made on President Reagan's life. When Bruce refused to sign, Carlson called her uncooperative and questioned her patriotism and professional ability. He demanded her home address and telephone number.

Special Agent Carlson returned one more day without subpoena. Bruce again showed him the state law. This time, she says, he threw it on the floor. Carlson then said, "Things have been put in motion to make your life difficult."

Six days after Bruce reported the threat to the President and after three visits without the correct legal papers, the Secret Service showed up with a subpoena on November 16. Bruce turned over the records and hours later the Secret Service arrested a man and charged him with making the threats.

Angered by the treatment she received and charging harassment, Bruce made an official complaint to the U.S. Attorney's office in Syracuse. "I felt like I was being treated like the criminal," she says.

The U.S. Attorney's office turned the complaint over to the Secret Service itself for investigation. On January 13 Bruce received a letter saying that the Secret Service conducted its own inquiry and found agents Ryan and Carlson not guilty of misconduct. "Perhaps in this instance the zeal of the agents may have led to a misunderstanding," the letter explained.

A Secret Service spokesman in Syracuse said that he could not comment on the charges because the death threat case is still pending. The agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters also would not comment.

But the harassment has had one positive result—it has turned Marie Bruce into a crusader for library-borrowers' privacy. Now she travels around the state speaking to librarians, making sure they know the law and its implications for them.

"What I'm concerned about is

to the souped-up civilian jeep, his eyes in black jack boots, moving slowly up flight-suit khaki, hovering briefly on a jacket emblazoned with lightning bolts and settling finally on the face inside a. The eyes blazed in blue almost too bright. One shock of hair, shining as of the jeep, sprouted from the corner

ed for forty years, captain," the patrol-ait a few more minutes."

, no more than ten seconds elapsing agade whine past sixty on its way to at the gate Moreau did a snap salute to his beret providing no protection or, his desperately suppressed smile no age woman who flew strategic bombers ps through mornings this cold. She did not play the game as well as the

pk over her shoulder at the sign which ving the isolated nuclear base with its rize most of the world's great cities. "You Are Now Entering the Most Dan- the American Highway." She had loving them even more as she began to ible meaning and crude rationalizing. radio commercials which, as a child, an the music they interrupted. "K-a-a- with a thunderous sonic boom. "That," k, attempting to mollify angry citizens e sound of security."

ie time, Moreau being the usual forty-eginning of a week of round-the-clock he cruised the base slowly, past rows of remained World War II Air Corps turned computerized high tech with eens and blipping targets inside. She long a ridge above the flight line- ere long rows of the disarmed B-52's adar-spoofing training missions. The

## LIFE IN THE U.S.

AM PROCHAVAN

15

Bufs, they called them, for Big Ugly Fat Fellows, although she saw them as anything but that. She had copilot Buffs now for six months and, this early in the morning, they sat bathed in surreal pea-soup yellow from the arc lamps that illuminated them against intruders in the night. The KC-135 tankers, with which her B-52's main line. They were much more de-

Then, finally the flight line Air Command plot the other better than all even she could

She walked she would miss Then she app super sensors half-buried he and nights. A terlaced with Force Author tarily. The ste in a pen in wh been scrutiniz eyes peering

The second He, too, wore smile. An auto hung deceptive open-holster metal detecto few totally se did not repor

Off to her line, ice mist armed, their megatons. White-tipped "Skunk" missiles protruded from the wings of two planes, including hers. Gravity bombs were tucked into the bomb bays. The four others had cruise missiles hidden in the bays. The planes were ready to go at a moment's notice. But

other long ers—and nickname. far down strategic could ex-her to be that not

ed breaths alert duty. ncing, the ended the even days bbbing in- "Deadly momen-aving her il she had using, shi h.

nt of her. ressed no dly force. sial jutter he ran a one of the h women

in an alert these were otions and

that some librarians might give in to these tactics," says Bruce. "I know that this has happened before and other librarians have given in. Very few people in this state were aware of the law. And I really feel that every single librarian should have a copy of that law because you never know who's going to come in and demand the circulation records."

In fact, at the public library in Johnson City, not far from Oneonta, a group of people did ask to see circulation records about two months ago. Library director Janet Ottman says a religious group requested a list of names and addresses of all the people who had checked out books about their religious faith. But Ottman had heard Marie Bruce tell her story and she knew she had a law to back her up. "There was no doubt in my mind that I couldn't release that kind of information," she said in a telephone interview.

Bruce has become a kind of

heroine to librarians around the country. Many have written and telephoned her, offering support and praising her courage. In an editorial, the Oneonta *Daily Star* applauded her integrity. "It is comforting," the paper wrote, "to know that even in such extreme circumstances, people like Ms. Bruce will stand for fundamental principles and protect the public's right to freedom of thought."

In 1982 New York became the 10th state to pass a library privacy law. Now 21 states have adopted similar laws. "A lot of individuals feel that they have a right to decide what other people read," says James McPhee of the New York State Library Association, "and so the first place they attack is the library because that's where the ideas are found." McPhee added that the succession of new laws was prompted by growing reports of harassment of library personnel by the Moral Majority and other

religious groups.

All of this has sparked talk among librarians about strengthening the laws and making them even more explicit. Some wonder whether a librarian should notify a book borrower that he or she is under investigation if the librarian is forced, under subpoena, to turn over library records. Does this amount to a tip-off?

What if innocent readers are investigated years after they take a book out? Is that a violation of their rights? Can they sue the librarian for turning over the information?

Marie Bruce wants to implement a circulation system that would destroy all borrower records once a book has been returned, examined and put back on the shelves. "I don't want anybody to know what I'm reading and I would do anything to keep those rights of my users private."

Katie Davis reports for National Public Radio.

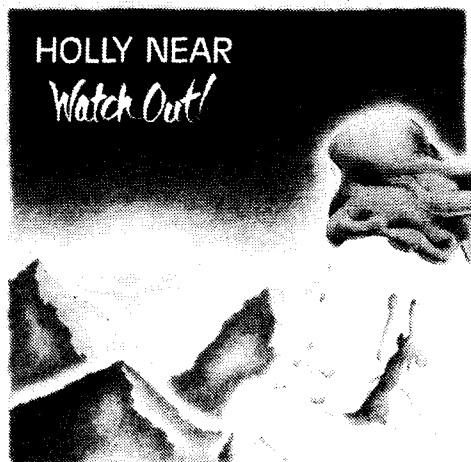
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**Femininity**

By Susan Brownmiller  
 Linden Press/Simon and  
 Schuster, 270 pp., \$14.95

By William Leach

Susan Brownmiller's latest book, *Femininity*, is well crafted and nicely written, reflecting a keen and intelligent mind. It is also a very curious feminist book. If feminism means empowering women to change society in their own interests, then this book has almost no feminist content.

It is, rather, a dirge about powerlessness and defeat—so much so that it tends to glorify heterosexual masculinity in a capitalist society as the most attractive model for success and achievement. This is a highly ironic perspective—one you would not expect from a woman who has led the battle against rape and is now at the helm of the anti-pornography movement.

Brownmiller approaches femininity (not femaleness, which she never clearly defines) from two directions. First of all, it is a camouflage, an illusion that profoundly handicaps women and that conceals their true, natural selves. From this point of view all women who wear makeup and high heels, speak softly and fret over hairstyles and diet are essentially female impersonators.

Second, femininity is fundamentally a response to the desires of men who have historically determined how women behave and what they think about themselves. According to Brownmiller, heterosexual men have always wanted women to act dependently and passively—behavior that stimulates male sexual desire and makes men feel strong and powerful by comparison.

So, in order to win men over, women have endured great physical and emotional misery, from footbinding to corsets, dresses to heels. They have worn furs and long hair because men have demanded it. To appease men, women have "specialized" in sentimentality, empathy, vulnerability and politeness—"characteristics that most men try to avoid."

"Femininity," Brownmiller writes, is "a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations." Whatever a feminine woman has done, in fact, has come from her need to "prove her heterosexual good will" at the expense of her humanity. Brownmiller contends matters have gotten worse today, since so many successful women are throwing in the towel, returning to the old hobbling habits in order to compete for a diminishing pool of desirable heterosexual men.

Against the femininity of women—and against gays, blacks, entertainers, etc., who, she claims, display some "feminine" traits—Brownmiller sets the blessings of untrammelled heterosexual masculinity. Unlike feminine women, dominant heterosexual men do not suffer from a crushing "duality of purpose"—the need to please and the drive to succeed. Free and single-minded, they embrace the future, use their bodies fluently and dynamically and choose to repudiate all artifice in dress and behavior.

"Men of action and power," Brownmiller writes, "are colorless by choice, it would seem, while their status is unchallenged and secure." Men don't need cosmetics to look good, she says: they glow naturally from the effects of achievement. Reversing an older argument linking cul-

# WOMEN

## Is it feminism or fatalism?



George Hoyningen-Huene

ture to men, nature to women, Brownmiller appears to say that heterosexual men are completely natural or outside of history. Presumably, if given the chance, everyone would choose to be heterosexually masculine.

This argument, if taken seriously, can lead to unacceptable conclusions. To say that powerful heterosexual men are free and most women are restricted, and that male freedom is dependent upon female restriction, is to offer women no escape. Brownmiller herself seems to believe this. Time and again she speaks of the "inevitable" retrenchments. It was "inevitable," therefore, that 19th-century dress reform would yield "blithely" to a "glamorous rivalry over how much nudity could be revealed." And again, "it was probably inevitable that the anti-makeup forces" of the late '60s "should lose. We were bucking too much history."

Brownmiller saves her strongest fatalism for the last pages. "Without a radical restructuring of a social order that works well enough in its present form for those extremely ambitious, competitive men whose prototypical ancestors arranged it, and who have little objective reason, just yet, to change the rules, what hope is there for a real accommodation to dual-purpose ambition? ...Pursuit of achievement in literature, science and the arts is a singleminded ambition that will never be restructured, for the competition, understandably, is fierce."

What hope for change, indeed, given the fact that men in power like things the way they are and most women, according to Brownmiller, live their lives by a "desperate strategy of appeasement."

If one accepts this argument, which emphasizes the powerlessness and victimization of women above everything else, there is no alternative but to feel despair. Yet Brownmiller's argument is too lopsided to be persuasive. She is wrong when she says that men have not suffered from any restriction and that they have no-

thing to learn from women.

The contrary case has been made repeatedly that women, not men, have enjoyed greater liberty in appearance and emotional behavior. Today, women can wear almost anything they please, while men struggle against rational homogeneity in dress and behavior demanded of them by repressive corporate practices. Translating the relative liberty that many women have in

these matters into symptoms of powerlessness misses the enemy, which is a society that rests on bleak hierarchies that serve men and require great emotional and sensual renunciation.

But this is not really the point. The fact is Brownmiller flubbed an opportunity to explain why more women than men "infuse" so much "passion into the stuff of everyday life" (an immensely attractive trait), why they feel so much freer to be emotional and more responsive to the needs of others, and why they more readily indulge themselves in makeup, color, ornament and whimsical dress even when they have power and success. Brownmiller attributes this behavior to victimization and subordination, but femininity (as well as masculinity) as a gender formation is much more complex, much more socially textured (does she really have to be reminded?) than her shallow, simplistic cultural argument indicates. It cannot be reduced to mere appearance.

Underlying such a conception of femininity is a rational functionalism that would strip all gender behavior of its irrational elements, its theater and play. The fact is, people often do silly things, wear silly things, even while they exercise mastery over their lives. Maybe silliness increases mastery, who knows? But Brownmiller is too wedded to a dreary functionalism to tolerate this contradiction. Indeed, she disparages all apparently non-rational female characteristics, including the biological ones—everything that prevents women from smoothly and single-mindedly climbing up the professional and corporate ladders.

Brownmiller's functionalism brings me to the most important weakness in *Femininity*, and one that also seriously marred her book on rape—the almost complete absence of historical perspective. Any radical politics

must be based on the transformative messages of history, on the potential and reality of change. But this approach is missing here.

Not only does Brownmiller collapse great stretches of time into a few paragraphs, she also appears to have done little reading in contemporary feminist scholarship. Why has she ignored the work of such scholars as Mari Jo Buhle, Bonnie Smith, Nancy Cott, Barbara Epstein, Nina Auerbach, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg? Their scholarship has clearly proven that a great many women, feminist and reformist, have been deeply empowered to attack the "male way" on the basis of inherited gender differences. Brownmiller contends that "motherhood and ambition have been opposing forces for thousands of years," but thousands of women have been radically politicized by female traditions of nurture and maternity to demand single-mindedly a transformation of the social system into a more humane, non-sexist, cooperative and democratic order.

Brownmiller argues for only one myth of femininity, but if she had read Nina Auerbach's study, *Women and the Demon*, she would have discovered another myth—a 19th-century one—that viewed woman not as a victim but as a "transformative power" with "infinite capacities of regeneration" and "self-creation." Brownmiller is absolutely correct when she observes that the "cutting edge of the movement for equal rights" is "being listened to." Why has she decided not to listen to her own history?

William Leach, a fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities, NYU, is author of *True Love and Perfect Union, the Feminist Reform of Sex and Society*, and is currently researching a book on the history of American department stores.

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions** and **\$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Kirby Mittelmeyer**.

### CHICAGO, IL

#### April 14

"The Middle East: Flashpoint for Nuclear War." There will be a day-long conference with workshops on superpower relations in the Middle East and the threat of nuclear war. Speakers include: Michael Klare, Stuart Schaar. From 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Loyola University, Damen Hall, 6525 N. Sheridan Road. For further information and pre-registration, call (312) 427-2533. Sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee and Illinois Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign.

### BOSTON, MA

#### April 14

"Turning the Tide: Strategies for Defeating Reaganism." An activist conference with Barbara Ehrenreich, Frances Fox Piven, Stanley Aronowitz, Ruth Messinger, Ray Bonner, former *New York Times* correspondent in El Salvador. Emerson Hall, Harvard University. 9:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Cost: \$5.00 in advance, \$7.00 at door. Mail registration to DSA Youth Section, c/o Tom Canel, 28 Lowell St., Apt. 1R, Somerville, MA 02143. Phone (617) 666-3921.

#### May 18-19

New England Conference on Union

Democracy. Paulist Center, 5 Park Street, Boston. Strengthening the right of workers to control unions. Speakers, participants: Joe Rauh, Clyde Summers, Judith Schneider, Ken Paff, Herman Benson, Scott Molloy, Eileen Silverstein, Mark Stern, Dominic Bozzotto, Celia Wcislo, many others: Teamsters, carpenters, electricians, public employees, transit workers, musicians, ironworkers, etc. For information: Association for Union Democracy, 30 Third Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217. (212) 855-6650.

### LOS ANGELES, CA

#### April 13-15

"Building the Left," the second DSA Western Youth Conference. Student Center, Los Angeles City College. Michael Harrington, Frances Moore Lappe, Rev. James Lawson, Blase Bonpane, Harry Britt, Sherry Novick, Jan Breidenbach, and many others. \$10 pre-registration; \$15 at the door. For information: DSA, 2936 W. 8th St., Los Angeles, CA 90005. (213) 385-0650.

### NEW YORK, NY

#### April 19, 20, 21

"The Encounter with America" is the theme of this year's Socialist Scholars Conference. It aims to examine the mutual impact of Marxism and the United States. This year, over 50 panels will examine the utility of contemporary socialist thought. Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY, Greenwich and Harrison Streets. For info: Dept. of Sociology, CUNY, 33 W. 42nd St., Rm. 901, New York, NY 10036. (212) 790-4320.

### ATLANTA, GA

#### April 27-29

Fifth Annual "Health By Choice" Conference, sponsored by North American Nutrition & Preventive Medicine

Association, Inc. Lectures, panels, workshops, exhibits and films dealing with newest advances in preventive medicine, gerontology, adjunctive cancer therapy, trace element research, medical self-care. NNPA, P.O. Box 592, Colony Square Station, Atlanta, GA 30361. (404) 475-0582.

### ANDOVER, NJ

#### July 21-30

War Resisters League Organizer's Training Program. Political philosophy, current issues and techniques of organizing are explored through discussions with experienced resource people and personal sharing. Cost \$220. To receive an application and brochure, contact WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012. (212) 228-0450. Application deadline June 1, 1984.

### INDIANA, PA

#### October 24-26

Indiana University of Pennsylvania will hold a conference on the global economy. Speakers include: Richard Barnett, Dave Dyson, Barbara Ehrenreich, Tim Harrison, David Landes, Ann Markusen, June Nash, Harley Shaiken, Tim Shorroch and Immanuel Wallerstein. Information: Irwin Marcus, History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705. (412) 357-2237.

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# Sayles

Continued from page 16

wearing a cross nads. "Brother—hmm, that's good, that's good. I came on over here, see, because nobody who looks like you ever comes up here unless they're gonna tear something down. But bless you with your picture. Bless you. I won't be trouble. I'll stay out of your way now. Bless you."

"I think coming up here opened the eyes of some whites," says black script supervisor Marco Williams, who works with the Black Filmmakers Foundation. "It sure did," says Bob Marshak, who's usually a potter in Santa Cruz, Calif., but is here taking photos. "You come here with a certain amount of fear—it's outside your experience. But it's much more neighborhoody than I had realized."

The first day they shot in Harlem, the crew got a quick education in the pluses and minuses of Harlem street life. They had locked the keys inside their van; a passerby helped them break into it, thus salvaging the production schedule. But the street samaritan had put down his travel bag to jimmy the window, and in seconds the bag—with his all-important methadone—had been stolen. Producer Maggie Renzi spent the rest of the day

filing a police report so he wouldn't be stranded without his methadone fix.

If the white crew members had never walked the streets of Harlem, neither had a lot of the blacks. "I had a thousand misconceptions when I started," says production assistant Kurt Douglas, fresh from film school downtown. His job is mostly talking to people; "crowd control" means something special on this shoot. "But it's been a lot of fun." Even so, he admits he secretly hoped he'd get sick to get out of this all-night shoot on Harlem's abandoned lots. But it's going well, and he goes back to hanging out with the hangers-on.

For assistant director Craig Rice, Harlem has been something of a shock. "I've been in the entertainment business all my life," he says. "But this is a hard shoot. I'm learning a lot. I'm a social worker here, and a counselor. A lot of these people are desperate, on the edge. But if you film here, you'd better involve the community."

Even for crew members who know Harlem well, fears die hard. "I grew up on 125th Street, and I moved back to Harlem as an adult," costumer Karen Perry says. "My daughter goes to school down the street. But my mother always told me, 'Don't go uptown—too rough.' When she found out I was working at night on 148th Street—well, my brother has been to the set four times now, just to make sure I'm O.K."

9:00 p.m.: A couple of middle-aged men amble up, craning to watch Brother discover his one-time mugger dead of an overdose. One catches Perry's eye, and she's about to give him a perfunctory nod when she does a double-take. "Sam, how are you?" she says. They swap stories of showbiz unemployment; they are not just neighbors, but colleagues from the days a decade ago when things looked more promising for black actors.

Scenes being filmed keep echoing with scenes on the street, especially fantasies of escape. In a bar scene, the drinkers speculate about life in outer space while playing a Space Invaders game. On the shoot, locals easily launch into talk of Venus, astrology and UFOs. But Harlem dwellers, too, keep asserting their sense of place. In a movie a small thing like choosing a restaurant can become a political act; one character refuses to go below 110th Street, even for Chinese food. Meanwhile, on the set people treat the film crew at first like tourists to be fleeced and then like foreign dignitaries.

10:00 p.m.: Someone gingerly approaches a white crew member. "Thank you," he says. "Thank you for visiting Harlem."

The residents of Harlem come out, not to gawk, but to assert their prior claim. Turf isn't just to be defended, however; it's also something to take pride in and even to show off. As much as their pride in ownership, they register an intense will

to communicate—on their terms. They like the idea of a movie made not only in their world but about it, and they like the idea of a black man starring in it. Harlem wants to go Hollywood, but not if it means leaving Harlem behind. They flock around Joe Morton whenever he finishes a shot.

Morton is something of a sensation. They recognize him not so much from his movie work as from the soaps and especially from an educational TV show called "Watch Your Mouth."

Morton, unfailingly polite, cool and respectful—he re-does Wilhelmina's autograph when he finds out it's her birthday—is happy to be there, both for them and for him. "It's almost impossible to find roles in the movies for a black actor," he says. "And most science fiction is like what Richard Pryor said about 2001—they must think there won't be any blacks by then."

"This role is great because I don't speak, and it brings out everybody's expectations when they imagine who I am and what I want. The role makes the audience look at Harlem from both white and black perspectives. It's Harlem seen not as a jungle, but from the eyes of innocence. That's why people get so excited when they hear the story—it'll finally be a movie where they'll get to see themselves on the screen."

A longer version of this article recently appeared in *Film Comment*.

## CLASSIFIED

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By Pat Aufderheide

6 p.m.: "Hey. What's the movie called?" Clutching his plastic cup, the guy warily thrusts out his chin.

Night is falling on 148th Street in Harlem as a raffish film crew sets up on an abandoned lot. An aimless crowd of kids on bikes, couples on a stroll and seasoned drunks gathers. Some people are setting up chairs and those little plastic cups circulate.

The young white woman juggling camera lenses says, "THE BROTHER WHO FELL TO EARTH. Or maybe we'll call it THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET."

"BROTHER, huh?" Suddenly the man straightens up. "Good title. What's it about?"

"A slave from outer space who falls to earth in Harlem."

"Man, he come to the right place. This here is the center of the world. Hey, it is out of this world."

John Sayles is making a science fiction movie about a place that might as well be outer space to most of us—the streets of Harlem. He's making it with \$200,000 of his own money, hoarded from scripting work on Hollywood features and from the cushion that the prestigious MacArthur grant he won last year has given him. It draws from his double-track movie-making background—both his exploitation and mainstream Hollywood work, and his personal features like *Return of the Secaucus Seven* and *Lianna*.

*Brother* is science fiction with a twist: this time, the alien comes home. The intergalactic slave escapes on the otherworldly underground railroad, which, just like in slavery days, ends in Harlem. Pursued by bounty hunters (one of them played by Sayles himself), he is rescued with the help of the people of Harlem. Befriended by barflies, mugged by junkies, tended by social workers, and first fussed over and then thrown out by his AFDC-mother landlady, the impassively naive alien (played by Joe Morton, seen recently in a lead role in PBS' *The File on Jill Hatch* and in a small role in *And Justice for All*) encounters the lived reality of racial discrimination and poverty. What's odd about him is not how otherworldly he is but how well he fits into the scene, where each person reads his silence and befuddlement differently.

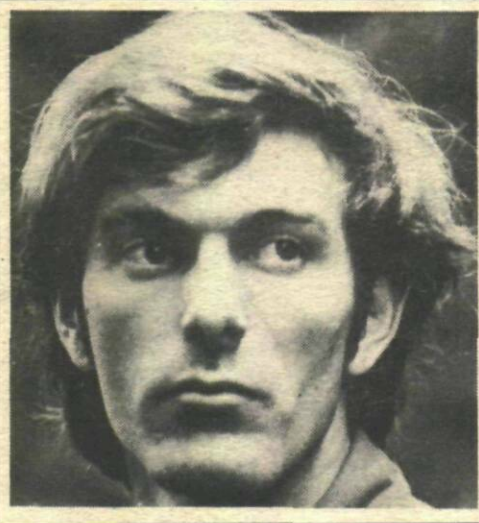
6:30: "Can I be inna picture? Who do I ask? Lemme be an extra. I'll do it for \$10."

"No, no me, I'll do it for \$5."

Sayles, with a social conscience forged in the '60s and a filmmaking style fed on mass-appeal Americana, wanted to make a movie with guts that black people would watch. "We knew we had to make it with the people of Harlem," he says. "And we knew we wanted to work with a largely black crew. The only hard part so far has been that everybody wants to work on it, and you wish you could employ them all."

A friendly relationship with the locals is crucial for visitors from the planet below 110th Street, especially for a low-budget production. "We need to have them want us here," says white location manager Paul Marcus. "We're on their turf. But I think it makes a difference what we're doing; people like the project."

The crew is a mixture—black and white, experienced and novice, women and men. For many of the blacks this is a Big Break; for the pros among them this may be the first time they've not been the *only* black on a crew. But within the crew, the interracial mixture turns out to be surprisingly unimportant. "I think the male-female divisions are more defining," says Fronza Woods, working the boom. She came to the project after making several shorts with the Women's Interart Center. "Just like in any shoot, the men talk to the men, and that's a habit that's hard to break," Marcus says. "It's been no different for me to work with a black crew. People who love this industry



# Family Affair

sayles goes to harlem



have some basic similarities. They are sophisticated and professional—the movie comes first." Maybe that's because of what the movie is. Everyone seems to agree that this independent production is a family affair. It's the kind of shoot where people sit around and talk for an hour after they knock off for the day.

They have something else in common, too. This is a first-time experience for nearly everybody—making a movie in Harlem. Hell, even *being* in Harlem is a first for many.

8:00 p.m.: The tidy middle-aged lady  
Continued on page 15

